F1 MAX CLOSES ON WINS RECORD

AUTOSPORT

8 SEPTEMBER 2022

GLIMPSE OF F1 2023?

Verstappen defeats resurgent Mercedes

Max wins at home as furious Hamilton is denied

‘We’re going to get that win’

LEWIS HAMILTON

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Edition 04/2022

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Ferrari fades, Merc challenges, Verstappen wins once more

Did we get a sneak preview of Formula 1 2023 last weekend? Ferrari seems to be falling further and further back, but the Dutch Grand Prix was the second event in three races at which Mercedes has provided some sort of challenge to the Max Verstappen steamroller.

Many questioned the Mercedes decision to leave Lewis Hamilton on medium tyres while switching George Russell to softs during the final safety car period, leaving the seven-time world champion vulnerable to attack from Verstappen. But, had Russell stayed on mediums to act as 'rear gunner', it's likely that both W13s would have been easy prey to the Red Bull and could have been overtaken by Charles Leclerc, potentially leaving Mercedes with a 3-4. Ultimately, as Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 16, Verstappen was simply too quick and probably would have won whatever the strategy.

The 'battle' for the 2022 crown is all but over, but we do seem set for some interesting races between now and the end of the season in November. If Mercedes can continue its current trajectory, perhaps we can have the championship contest in 2023 we should have had this year. Then it's over to Ferrari to prove it can up its game and give us a three-way title fight for the first time in more than a decade.

One series Mercedes did conquer again this year was Formula E. Jake Boxall-Legge explains how on p44, while Damien Smith talks to the man most likely to win the World Touring Car title on p50.

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NEXT WEEK
15 SEPTEMBER

Italian Grand Prix action
All the F1 drama from Monza, Goodwood Revival preview and a free supplement

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McLaren wins Piastri case as Alpine saga emerges

FORMULA 1

Oscar Piastri will race for McLaren in Formula 1 next season after the Contract Recognition Board threw out Alpine's claim that it had a contract in place with the Australian 2021 FIA Formula 2 champion.

Piastri's contract saga has been the talk of the paddock for the past six weeks, but it finally came to an end after the CRB hearing last week ruled in McLaren's favour, saying it was the only team with a valid contract in place for next year. McLaren immediately followed this news with confirmation that Piastri would be racing in 2023 and beyond after agreeing a multi-year deal to partner Lando Norris.

"I'm extremely excited to be making my F1 debut with such a prestigious team as McLaren and I'm very grateful for the opportunity that's been offered to me," said Piastri. "The team has a long tradition of giving young talent a chance, and I'm looking forward to working hard alongside Lando to push the team towards the front of the grid."

Insiders have shone a light on a series of blunders by Alpine that caused Piastri to slip from its grasp, and changed the narrative surrounding McLaren and its moves to part company with Daniel Ricciardo.

Alpine maintained throughout the case that it had an agreement signed in November 2021 with Piastri, but it emerged in the proceedings that this was only a 'terms sheet', which was not legally binding. Regular delays from Alpine in getting an F1 contract over to Piastri were blamed on 'bottlenecks', while it only filed the November terms sheet to the CRB in order to sort Piastri's superlicence for his reserve role, after adding a label reading 'legally binding heads of terms' to the top. But the sheet was also headed 'subject to contract', and only said it was 'likely' that the plan was for Piastri to be a reserve driver for 2022 before taking up a race seat, with nothing definitive specified.

It wasn't until 19 May that Piastri was finally sent an F1 race seat contract, but it was not what he expected. Alpine proposed a four-year agreement, with Piastri spending 2023 and potentially 2024 at Williams before joining Alpine for 2025. This was never signed and, realising an Alpine F1 seat was not realistic in the short term, Piastri's camp decided to look elsewhere, and conversations with McLaren accelerated. A provisional deal was signed on 4 June before a full contract was finalised one month later, almost four weeks before Alonso's shock exit forced Alpine to spring into action and announce Piastri for 2023 – not knowing he was already long gone.

> **"I KNOW HOW THIS SPORT IS: IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL TO ME"**

McLaren is understood to have notified Ricciardo as early as the end of May that it was exploring alternative options for 2023. His 13 July social media post reaffirming his commitment to the team was more of a negotiating tool than a case of him being kept in the dark.

Piastri said he found it "upsetting" and "bizarre" that Alpine announced him for 2023 and declared that he had a race seat at the factory in front of other staff following a simulator session, having informed team principal Otmar Szafnauer on multiple occasions that he would not be racing for

the team. "I still haven't had the opportunity to say goodbye and it's something I want to do to show my gratitude to all the men and women at Enstone," he said.

Szafnauer denied that Alpine had been disloyal to Piastri, saying it had "performed on a contract that we thought we had above and beyond". He disputed Piastri's story of an announcement after a simulator session, and refused to backtrack on accusing him of a lack of integrity over the recent Belgian Grand Prix weekend. Alpine has, however, accepted the CRB decision and will have to fork out nearly £540,000 in legal fees.

Ricciardo revealed at last weekend's Dutch GP that he had spoken to Piastri's manager, ex-F1 driver Mark Webber. "I feel he didn't need to, but he felt like he wanted to, in a way, apologise and try to just see how I'm doing," Ricciardo revealed. "I know how this sport is: it's nothing personal to me. He feels really bad."

Although Piastri is contracted to serve as Alpine's reserve until the end of 2022, the team is set to make a decision on his future this week, potentially opening the door for an early exit.

LUKE SMITH & JONATHAN NOBLE

Herta needs superlicence exemption for AlphaTauri

FORMULA 1

Red Bull will only release Pierre Gasly to join Alpine for 2023 if it can secure a superlicence exemption for IndyCar race winner Colton Herta to race in Formula 1 with AlphaTauri.

Gasly is under contract for next year with Red Bull sister team AlphaTauri, but talks are well under way with Alpine, which has turned to the Frenchman after Fernando Alonso's exit to Aston Martin and the loss of Oscar Piastri to McLaren.

Although Red Bull will not stand in Gasly's way with Alpine, it will only agree to release him once a replacement has been finalised, according to team boss Christian Horner. "Pierre is doing a good job within AlphaTauri," said Horner. "So I don't think there will be a desire to change if there wasn't an interesting option available."

The 'interesting option' to whom Horner refers is seven-time IndyCar race winner Herta. But Red Bull faces a stumbling block — the American has acquired only 32 of the 40 qualification points to be eligible for a superlicence.

Many F1 team bosses feel that the FIA should not make an exemption for *force majeure*. And F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali told Autosport that he thinks the FIA should stick to its own rules and wants the process to be respected. Talks took place between Domenicali and FIA president Mohammed Ben Sulayem at last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix about the matter.

Regarding the superlicence situation, Horner said: "I think that's an FIA issue. We just need clarity for what is the situation regarding driver points, which hopefully will come sooner rather than later, because that plays a key role obviously in the driver merry-go-round."

It is understood that Herta's racing experience in Europe is part of the argument being used in his favour. He drove in MSA Formula (now British F4) in 2015, finishing third as Lando Norris won the title, before spending 2016 in Euroformula Open. The possible arrival of Herta could be a big boost for F1 commercially by getting an American driver on the grid at a time when it is enjoying significant growth in the US.

One driver not in contention for a seat at AlphaTauri is Mick Schumacher, who Red Bull advisor Helmut Marko ruled out to Autosport at Zandvoort last weekend. Schumacher is to be a free agent in his search for a seat in 2023, since it is understood that his relationship with Ferrari as a member of its driver academy will come to an end after this year.

The German is tipped to lose his seat with Haas after two seasons in F1. The American-owned team is thought to be looking at Antonio Giovinazzi as a potential replacement to partner Kevin Magnussen from next year.

LUKE SMITH & ADAM COOPER

STALEY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Enough is enough: Verstappen slams Dutch flare throwers

FORMULA 1

World champion Max Verstappen led Formula 1 drivers in condemning the fan who threw a flare onto the track during qualifying for last weekend's Dutch Grand Prix, resulting in a clampdown for race day.

A red flag was shown early in Q2 when an orange flare was spotted on the track after being thrown by a fan from the grandstand overlooking Turn 12. The culprit was pointed out to security staff by members of the crowd in the nearby area and ejected from the circuit.

Another flare was thrown towards the track in Q3 at pit exit, but it failed to go over the fence, although its orange smoke could be seen during the final laps.

Verstappen said it was "very silly" and "stupid" for one to be thrown onto the track, adding: "Just don't do that. It's not good for anyone — you get thrown out so you can't see the race and for us the session is stopped because it's dangerous when there is stuff on the track. [You] shouldn't do it."

Notices were placed at the circuit's spectator entrance gates that flares were not allowed, but that did not stop a number of them getting into the track.

A stricter warning was issued by the promoters after the incident on Saturday, saying flares would not be tolerated: "The organisation once again appeals to the common sense of all our fans and warns that the use of flares will not be tolerated."

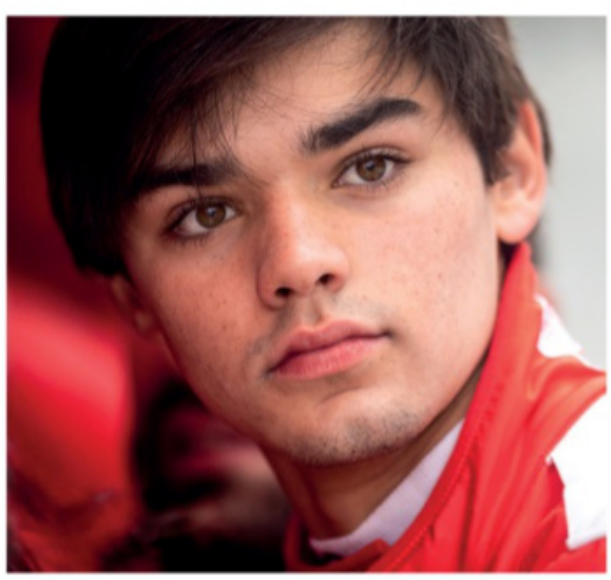
The use of flares by Verstappen fans has been frequent at grands prix in recent years, making it a point of discussion in recent drivers' briefings due to concerns about the smoke impairing vision.

Williams driver Nicholas Latifi said he "couldn't see anything" as he completed his final lap at Zandvoort last year due to the smoke, and suggested tougher security checks. Four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel was less optimistic when asked about a firm ban on flares, the Aston Martin driver saying: "Good luck!"

LUKE SMITH

P16 VERSTAPPEN'S VICTORY

Montoya Jr impresses on F3 race debut



FRECA/ROZENDAAL/DUTCH PHOTO AGENCY

FORMULA 3

Sebastian Montoya, the son of ex-Formula 1 star and Indycar champion Juan Pablo Montoya, scored points on an impressive FIA Formula 3 Championship debut at Zandvoort last weekend.

The 17-year-old, who lies 10th in the Formula Regional European standings, was drafted in at Campos Racing for the Dutch event. The team's American driver Hunter Yeany is still sidelined with a wrist injury, and Oliver Goethe, who replaced Yeany at the Hungaroring and Spa, was back on Euroformula Open duty at Imola last weekend.

Montoya was comfortably the fastest of the Campos drivers in qualifying, taking seventh place in the times. From sixth on the reversed grid, he finished eighth in the sprint race. He followed that up with another eighth in the feature race on Sunday.

The presence of Montoya and the return of DTM driver David Schumacher (son of Ralf) with Charouz Racing System meant there were three sons of F1 race winners on the grid, with Jarno Trulli's boy Enzo an ever-present this season at Carlin.

Montoya returns to FRegional action with Prema at the Red Bull Ring this weekend, meaning he can't contest the Monza F3 finale.

DAKAR RALLY Audi has unveiled the latest iteration of its RS Q e-tron Dakar Rally weapon, which now carries the suffix 'E2'. The car has had work carried out on its electric drivetrain, and features all-new bodywork and enhanced aerodynamics, lowering its weight and centre of gravity. Improvements have been made to the cockpit and ease of wheel-changing. As a key part of preparations for Audi's second Dakar Rally assault in January, the RS Q e-tron E2, pictured in a Zaragoza test in July, will contest next month's Morocco Rally. **Photo by Audi/Kunkel**

Lotterer joins Andretti team

FORMULA E

Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Andre Lotterer will remain in Formula E for the 2022-23 season with Avalanche Andretti, replacing Oliver Askew at the team after leaving Porsche's squad.

Lotterer looked set to depart the championship after being named as one of the drivers of Porsche's upcoming LMDh project. The German manufacturer replaced him with 2019-20 champion Antonio Felix da Costa for the start of FE's Gen3 era, but he harboured ambitions of remaining in the series.

Andretti is switching from BMW to use Porsche powertrains next season, and this gave Lotterer an FE reprieve at Askew's expense. The American squad last week announced its retention of British talent Jake Dennis on a multi-year basis. "Working together with Jake will be a great combination to continue to push the team to the front of the field in Formula E," said the 40-year-old Lotterer.

Askew looks set to depart FE entirely after struggling to make an impression during the first three quarters of his rookie season. Although the Floridian then improved to claim a fourth in London and fifth in Seoul, it was not enough for him to earn a second season.

• Andretti Autosport's Indy Lights team will give a test this month to two-time W Series champion Jamie Chadwick. The Briton, who leads the 2022 standings, will take to the track in the IndyCar feeder category at Sebring on 21 September.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

IN THE HEADLINES

SUSTAINABLE FUEL IN F2/3

The FIA Formula 2 and F3 championships are to introduce sustainable fuel for 2023. Starting with 55% next year, fuel supplier Aramco is targeting an incremental increase to 100% sustainability in 2027. The World Rally Championship is the first FIA series to pioneer the concept, and introduced 100% sustainable fuel this season.

NISSANY GETS BANNED

F2 veteran Roy Nissany has become the latest series 'bad boy' to face a one-round ban for exceeding 12 penalty points on his licence. The DAMS-run Israeli collided with David Beckmann behind the safety car at Zandvoort last weekend. Both received two points, pushing Nissany's total to 13. DAMS had yet to declare a replacement driver for this weekend's round at Monza as Autosport went to press.

OGIER FOR NEW ZEALAND

Eight-time World Rally champion Sebastien Ogier will rejoin the Toyota team to contest Rally New Zealand later this month. The Frenchman, who has been sharing the car with Esapekka Lappi this season, said the 29 September-2 October event was "top of the list of rallies that I wanted to do this year. I have only done this rally once before. The rally itself is really beautiful. Your roads are one of the best in the world for rallying." Ogier missed out on a maiden WRC win in NZ in 2010 when he spun three corners from the end of the final stage.

MASI GETS SUPERCARS GIG

Infamous ex-Formula 1 race director Michael Masi has been confirmed as replacing former racer Neil Crompton as chairman of the Supercars Commission for Australia's top race series. It's a return to his roots for Masi, who was race director for the Super2 series and deputy race director for Supercars before he moved into his F1 role.

Toyota, Peugeot get breaks for Fuji round

WEC

Toyota and Peugeot have received performance breaks for this weekend's Fuji round of the World Endurance Championship and Alpine has been pegged back. The revised Balance of Performance for the penultimate event of the 2022 WEC schedule follows Alpine's victory last time out at Monza in July.

Alpine's grandfathered Gibson-engined A480 LMP1 car had a clear edge over the Le Mans Hypercars from Toyota and Peugeot in Italy. It was the better part of two tenths per lap quicker over the course of the six hours, so the revised BoP can be regarded as a reaction to that advantage.

The minimum weights for the Toyota GR010 HYBRID and the Peugeot 9X8 (right) have been reduced by 18kg for the Japanese event on Sunday – down to 1053 and 1061kg respectively – and the power allowed to the normally aspirated Gibson V8 in the back of the A480 reduced to its lowest level this season: a maximum output of 399kW, equivalent to 535bhp.

That's a reduction of 29kW (or 39bhp) from Monza. The amount of energy the ORECA LMP1 design can use over the course of a stint between pitstops has been reduced by 43kW in line with the new maximum power.

The weight for the Alpine and the power outputs of the Toyota and the Peugeot are unchanged for the weekend.

The Chevrolet Corvette C8.R has been pegged back after its GTE Pro class victory at Monza. The solo Corvette Racing entry has had 10kg added to its minimum weight, bringing it up to 1265kg.

Porsche, meanwhile, has been given a helping hand for Fuji. The two factory GTE Pro 911 RSRs have been given an air-restrictor break and a reduction in minimum weight: the restrictor has been increased in diameter from 30.8 to 31.2mm and the weight reduced from 1264 to 1259kg.

GARY WATKINS

Rast tests as BMW puts miles on new LMDh

WEC/IMSA

BMW has completed the initial, European phase of testing with its new M Hybrid V8 LMDh prototype – and has already given 2023 signing Rene Rast a turn behind the wheel. The German was allowed dispensation to drive the car by current employer Audi last month.

BMW undertook its final test in Europe at Motorland Aragon (right) in August before transferring to North America. Rast tested alongside BMW drivers Connor De Phillippi and Sheldon van der Linde during the Spanish run, which followed a roll-out at Varano at the end of July and a multi-day test at Barcelona earlier in August.

Rast has joined a growing roster of drivers who have sampled the car. Augusto Farfus, Marco Wittmann, Nick Yelloly and Philipp Eng have all driven the M Hybrid V8, along with BMW juniors Dan Harper, Neil Verhagen and Max Hesse, who undertook straightline testing in the car.

BMW Motorsport boss Andreas Roos explained that it has been "important to get feedback from as many drivers as possible". He said that the "response has been positive" so far. "The first weeks of testing with the BMW M Hybrid V8 went well," he continued. "We have completed a lot of kilometres, during which we uncovered the first weaknesses, which are totally normal with a new car, and have solved some of them already. We laid a good foundation during the tests in Europe. Now we enter the next development stage in the USA."

That includes official tests at Road Atlanta in October and Daytona in December, which will be mandatory for any manufacturer wishing to race in IMSA next year.

Rast's programme for 2023 alongside his commitments with the McLaren Formula E team have not been fixed, according to Roos. But he raised the prospect of the German joining the Rahal squad in the IMSA series for some of the endurance events in 2023. It is then expected that Rast will be part of BMW's factory World Endurance Championship campaign with WRT, with which he is currently racing in LMP2 and has long-standing links stretching back to 2013.

GARY WATKINS

Hartley joins IMSA leaders

PETIT LE MANS

Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Brendon Hartley will make a return to the IMSA SportsCar Championship after an absence of more than three years at Road Atlanta next month. The New Zealander has been recruited by the Wayne Taylor Racing Acura squad to make a bid for a second win in the Petit Le Mans 10-hour enduro.

The Toyota World Endurance Championship driver's previous IMSA start came back at the 2019 Sebring 12 Hours, which is his only appearance in the series since he took victory at Petit in 2017 driving Extreme Speed Motorsports' Onroak-Nissan DPi (right) with Ryan Dalziel and Scott Sharp. This time he will share an Acura ARX-05 with championship leaders Ricky Taylor and Renger van der Zande in place of Will Stevens in the WTR line-up.

"When Wayne called me a few weeks ago, I jumped at the opportunity, especially having Ricky and Filipe as team-mates," said Hartley. "I've done Petit a few times before and it's a special event for me – the race in which I made my American endurance racing debut back in 2012. It's a tough, old-school track that all of the drivers love. I'm well aware that WTR is in the middle of a championship fight, which adds a little pressure, and I'm up for it."

Stevens, who contested the Daytona 24 Hours and Sebring in the solo WTR entry, remains part of the team's set-up and has already driven the Acura ARX-06 LMDh prototype that will race next year.

Hartley's fellow Toyota WEC driver Kamui Kobayashi has been contesting all four of the long-distance IMSA rounds that make up the Michelin-sponsored Endurance Cup, but doesn't expect to return next year. He is racing a Cadillac for the Action Express Racing team, and next year the General Motors marque will be one of Toyota's competitors in the Hypercar class of the WEC. He explained that his role as team principal of the Toyota squad is also taking up more of his time.

GARY WATKINS

WTCR to finish in Middle East

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP

The World Touring Car Cup will race in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia for its final two rounds of the 2022 campaign.

The series had originally planned to end its season with an Asian leg comprising China, South Korea and Macau, but organisers were forced to reshuffle its calendar due to restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The next round will take place in Bahrain (10-12 November) alongside the World Endurance Championship finale, followed by a climax under lights at the Saudi Arabian GP venue of Jeddah on 25-27 November.

The third of the Asian races will not be replaced due to financial considerations.

"It's great to finally have a joint event with the WEC," said FIA Touring Car Commission president Alan Gow. "Despite obvious differences in cars and race durations, touring cars and sportscars belong to the same family of closed-cockpit racing. There have always been crossovers between the two and drivers tend to switch from one discipline to another."

Hyundai's Mikel Azcona currently leads the WTCR championship standings.

TOM HOWARD

P50 AZCONA INTERVIEW

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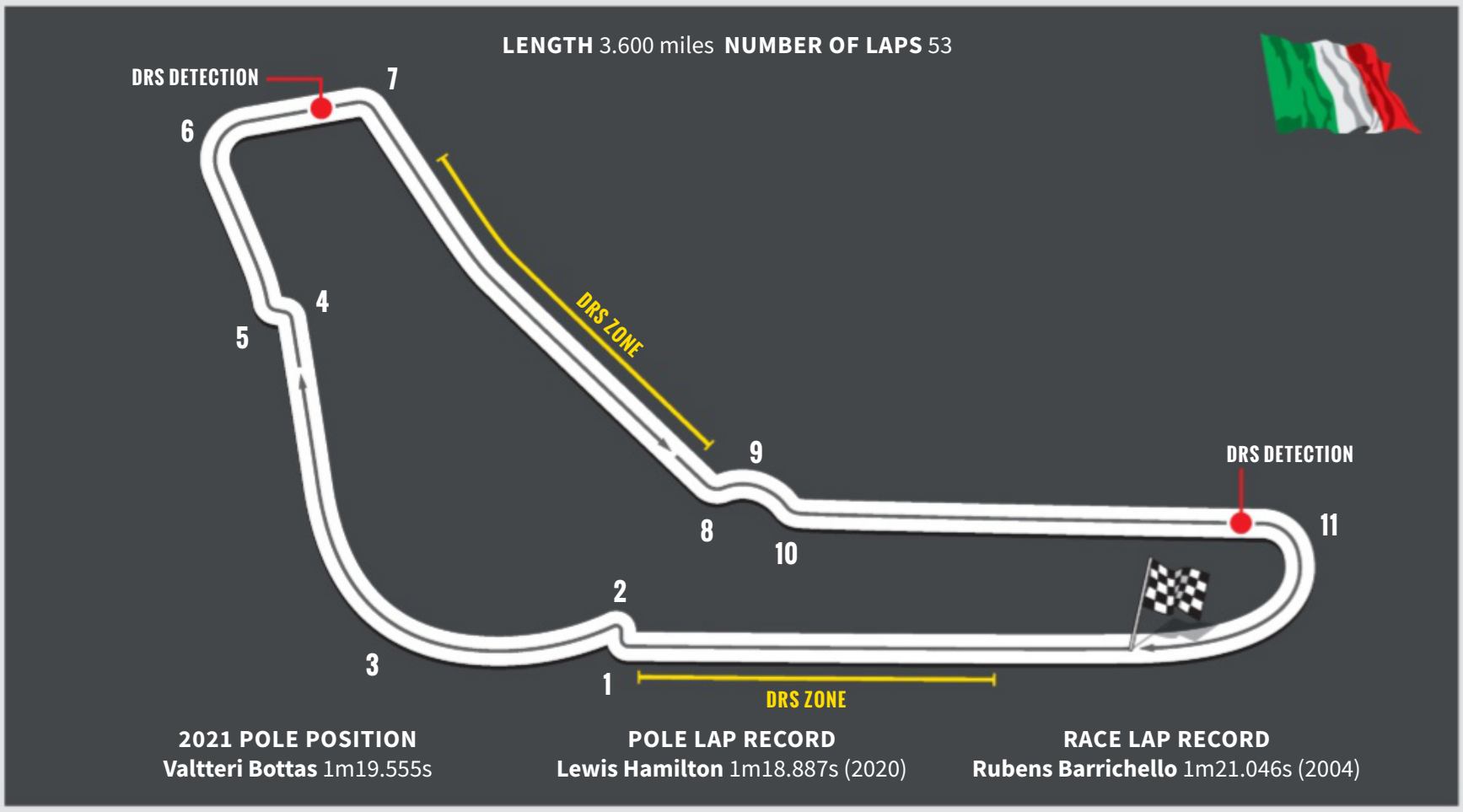

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Saturday 10 September
FP3 1200
QUALIFYING 1500

Sunday 11 September
RACE 1400

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TYRE ALLOCATION

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

Drivers

1	**Verstappen**	310
2	**Leclerc**	201
3	**Perez**	201
4	**Russell**	188
5	**Sainz**	175

Constructors

1	**Red Bull**	511
2	**Ferrari**	376
3	**Mercedes**	346
4	**Alpine**	125
5	**McLaren**	101

Russell closing on fight for second in points

STALEY

RACE STATS

Previous winners

2021	**Daniel Ricciardo**	McLaren
2020	**Pierre Gasly**	AlphaTauri
2019	**Charles Leclerc**	Ferrari
2018	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2017	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2016	**Nico Rosberg**	Mercedes
2015	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2014	**Lewis Hamilton**	Mercedes
2013	**Sebastian Vettel**	Red Bull
2012	**Lewis Hamilton**	McLaren

Jacques Laffite claimed his and Ligier's first F1 pole at Monza in 1976

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Monza points tallies

Hamilton	190
Vettel	141
Bottas	111
Alonso	105
Ricciardo	89
Perez	61
Leclerc	37
Norris	31
Sainz	30
Stroll	29

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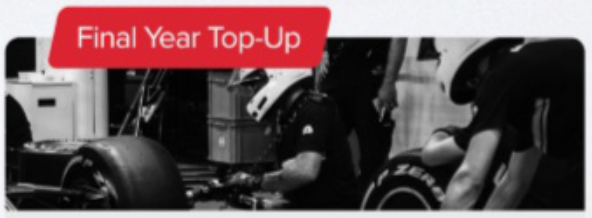

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Stats won't tell the whole tale

On his current trajectory, Max Verstappen is set to break a famous Formula 1 record, one that will provide a misleading headline for the true story of the 2022 season

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

"I don't think it really portrays so far actually how the season went in terms of competitiveness." Max Verstappen, speaking at the Belgian Grand Prix two weeks ago, sums it up perfectly. Two races and two more wins later and his points lead has gone from 80 to 109. Leaving his latest triumph at Zandvoort, the conclusion is inescapable: Verstappen is going to be the 2022 world champion.

But there's much more he can still achieve. Statistics to strengthen a legend. Essentially, Verstappen is on course to break Formula 1's single-season win record, currently shared by Michael Schumacher and Ferrari's F2004 with Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull's RB9 — on 13 each from 2004 and 2013. He can also beat Vettel's longest win streak — nine to see off that 2013 campaign.

Given the Dutchman is just three wins away from equalling the biggest single-season total, let's first assess how his feat would stack up against those legends. Because 2022 is actually an outlier campaign. For a start, the F2004 and RB9 were clearly the quickest cars of those respective seasons. In Autosport's supertimes metric, the F2004 was on average 0.218% quicker than the BAR 006, while the RB9 headed Mercedes' W04 by 0.105%. The 2004 supertimes also do a disservice to Ferrari. Its Bridgestone rubber was not at its best early in a stint. That made Ferrari's qualifying performance weaker relative to its opposition than its race pace, which was crushing. This was also the era of qualifying with fuel loads

"The RB18 didn't start off as the class of the campaign regarding ultimate pace or reliability"

required to start the race, further skewing the figures. By contrast, Ferrari's F1-75 edges the RB18 as the quickest car (a distinctly different thing from being the 'best') of 2022 by a 0.052% average.

Both the F2004 and RB9 were evolution/conclusion cars of legendary engineering ancestry. The Jean Todt/Ross Brawn/Rory Byrne/Schumacher superteam produced a car that held so many records for so long. The RB9 was the best of Adrian Newey's brilliant high-rake/exhaust blown diffuser concept that went back to 2009. That car's weakness was, really, the Pirelli rubber it had to run — and it must be remembered it only achieved its dominant run after the compound constructions changed mid-season.

The RB18 did not start off as the class of the 2022 campaign regarding ultimate pace or reliability. It was also an inconsistent package when it came to tyre preservation. And it won't go down as the most dominant or fastest car in F1 history either. Of the six cars that share the second-highest single season win total for one driver — 11 — two stand out as truly historic in terms of pace.

The Mercedes W05 of 2014 and that team's W11 from two years ago have the biggest average supertimes gap to closest opposition of any of the cars relating to the record Verstappen is marching towards. The W05 had a whopping 0.881% average ultimate pace advantage over Williams's FW36, and the W11 restored Mercedes' biggest gap to the field in the turbo hybrid era (pre-2022 rule changes) to an only slightly less massive 0.594% over the RB16. The W11 also holds the accolade of producing F1's fastest-ever lap — in Lewis Hamilton's hands in qualifying at the 2020 Italian GP.

The 2014 and 2020 Mercedes cars also provide comparisons to Verstappen in 2022. Hamilton didn't break the single-season win record in 2014 because of the strength of his team-mate: Nico Rosberg. In 2020, Valtteri Bottas provided a sterner test than Sergio Perez now is for Verstappen, and Mercedes gave away wins at Silverstone and Monza, while Hamilton missed a race with COVID. Add those back to bring his 2020 total to 14 and Verstappen would need 15 this year to break the record.

But he is surely going to set a new standard, and this shows two things. One is just how brilliant he is now. The other consideration is what Verstappen refers to above. In addition to the RB18 not being an all-time great, Red Bull's and Verstappen's opposition have made this campaign far easier than it should have been.

Ferrari's strategy shambles and pitstop blunders continue. Leclerc gave away pole last weekend, without which the race could have been very different. That actually would have given Mercedes' brilliant one-stop strategy an even better chance of working, but the Silver Arrows squad has itself erred in handing Red Bull another advantageous element in producing the sub-par W13 in the first place. Nevertheless, Zandvoort showed both how much of a single-race threat Leclerc can still be to Verstappen this year, as well as Mercedes' pedigree. That's why the consecutive-wins record seems less likely to fall this year.

Of the remaining races, only Singapore and Suzuka get near high-downforce requirements, where Red Bull falls back closer to its opposition. But they have long straights too, requiring the set-up compromises Red Bull has been on top of in 2022. It's also nailing its strategy calls. Stopping Verstappen for softs under the late safety car on Sunday avoided any Hungary 2019 or Spain 2021 defeats through a lack of aggression. A Verstappen single-season win record might stand out from those he's surely about to topple, but it's not because he or his team have been anything other than excellent overall.

P16 DUTCH GP REPORT

Andrea Dovizioso's legacy

MotoGP's nearly man — three times a runner-up — has decided to hang up his helmet. Time to take stock of a fine career

LEWIS DUNCAN

The veteran Italian's career has been unconventional, unexpected and unsurprising across his two decades in grand prix motorcycle racing. At another point in time, Andrea Dovizioso may very well have been a multiple world champion at the top level. He had the talent, but the timing always felt just a little bit off.

Dovizioso, a world champion in the 125cc class in 2004, came to MotoGP in 2008 on a satellite Honda before earning a move to the factory squad the following season. A maiden victory in iffy conditions at the British Grand Prix, held at Donington Park, seemed like the natural progression for a rider of his speed in his sophomore campaign.

That the well dried up after that point was unexpected. A regular on the podium in 2010 and 2011 at the works Honda squad, he was made surplus to requirements when factories were banned from running three-rider teams. A move to the Tech3 Yamaha squad for 2012 allowed him to score six podiums on the satellite M1 before a return to the factory ranks, with the struggling Ducati, in 2013.

Ducati had just gone through a messy relationship with Valentino Rossi that netted just three podiums. The bike wasn't very good and the team wasn't operating very well. Dovizioso's arrival in 2013 didn't yield much, but perseverance, his experience, and a reshaping of Ducati's race department saw success slowly come its way. But by the time Ducati came closer to breaking a drought dating back to 2010, Dovizioso looked like he was no longer flavour of the month. Andrea Iannone, Ducati's rapid young Italian, was brought into the factory squad in 2015 and, when the team started courting Jorge Lorenzo for 2017, it seemed that Dovizioso would lose out.

> **"That he 'didn't expect' the 'crazy' support he received over his final weekend spoke volumes"**

Iannone's recklessness in the Argentinian GP of 2016, which robbed Ducati of a double podium, ultimately offered Dovizioso a reprieve, and in Malaysia that year he finally celebrated a second victory in MotoGP, more than seven years after his first.

In 2017 he won six times for Ducati to give the marque its first genuine title challenge since 2007, Dovizioso going up against the might of Marc Marquez and thoroughly embarrassing Ducati's decision to pay Lorenzo millions more euros to get nowhere near his Italian team-mate. Dovizioso came up second-best against Marquez, missing the title by 37 points having kept it running to the final round. He was runner-up twice more in the ensuing years, but the win count started to slow down and his deficit to Marquez grew wider. That was by no means a reflection on Dovizioso's talent — more the unrelenting genius of Marquez at his absolute best.

A clash of egos within Ducati between Dovizioso and general manager Gigi Dall'Igna ultimately spelled the end of his tenure there come the end of 2020. After turning down an Aprilia ride for a sabbatical in 2021, he returned full-time with Petronas SRT — which morphed into RNF Racing for 2022 — but failed to replicate the success he found on the Yamaha back in 2012.

Again, that isn't a reflection of Dovizioso. Over the past two years, only reigning world champion Fabio Quartararo has been able to extract the best from the difficult M1 — more so in 2022. Dovizioso genuinely didn't expect his struggles on the Yamaha, and said that the riding style needed to replicate what Quartararo is doing is just not natural to him.

The MotoGP landscape also wasn't as competitive back in 2012 as it is now. Back then, the Yamaha and Honda were the only bikes capable of even getting to the podium in dry conditions.

All of this led Dovizioso to decide to bring his career to an end at last weekend's San Marino GP. He was surrounded by friends, family and an adoring crowd, who gave him a flag salute at his race truck on the Sunday as he headed into his garage for the last time. Dovizioso, who rode to 12th, said his send-off was "perfect".

That he "didn't expect" the "crazy" support he received over his final weekend spoke volumes about a rider who has, for the most part, remained genuine through his career. He has spoken openly and in depth about many a situation, gaining massive respect from the media. Case in point: twice our interview at Silverstone was postponed because of his retirement announcement, something Dovizioso personally apologised for.

The situation he found himself in during 2022 was of his own making. He failed to read the changing world of MotoGP in 2020 and shot himself in the foot. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but the Aprilia showed promise even in 2020 and is now a frontrunning bike.

But the past year should merely be a footnoted in a career where he — so far — remains the only rider who could genuinely take on Marquez and beat him. Duels in Austria in 2017 and 2019, Qatar in 2018 and 2019, and Japan in 2017 showed Dovizioso at his absolute best. And though he may not have been able to beat Marquez to the title, he's still the only rider in MotoGP who has come close.

So, let's remember him for that, for the work he did in making Ducati competitive again and for his honesty. Racing in an era of some absolute legends, Dovizioso didn't shame himself — something the history books will reflect.

P42 MOTOGP REPORT

YOUR SAY

Historic motorsport has so much going for it, but it needs the younger generations to be interested for it to flourish into the future

MICHAEL SKEET

Why can't common sense prevail?

Why in the motorsport universe, where there are so many brilliant minds, does common sense not prevail? It's a question that shouldn't really need answering. Marcus Pye's column (Club Autosport, 11 August) highlighting Historic motorsport's ongoing issue of grid numbers being affected by, among other things, too many events, and cars that overlap so many different championships, shows that this needs addressing urgently.

Yes, the cost of living crisis currently affecting everything is out of the hands of championship co-ordinators, but what can be done is that the historic motorsport world comes together and talks about how categories can be amalgamated, so that as many cars as possible are on the grids for us spectators to watch.

Do there really have to be so many different organisations chasing after the same racers as everyone else? Could it even be possible to have mini Silverstone Classic-type events with full grids, for instance, going round the different circuits as a collective, rather than some championships racing at Thruxton, while others are at Oulton Park on the same day?

Historic motorsport has so much going for it, but it needs the younger generations to be interested for it to flourish into the future. Having full grids of wonderful/exciting cars out on circuit would go a long way to help this happen.

Michael Skeet
Lordswood, Southampton

Give praise when it's due

I am stunned by the praise heaped on Max Verstappen following his Belgian Grand Prix win. The fastest car on the grid by a country mile, a good start and a relatively easy passage through the field, Lewis Hamilton took himself out of the equation early doors, as did others, and a safety car to compress the field as he moved forward.

It was of course a good drive, but he is world champion, albeit via the Abu Dhabi debacle, and it should be expected of him.

It was compared to the brilliant drive by Hamilton in Brazil last year — surely not! I was hopeful that as Verstappen closed on the faster cars a race would develop, but 'faster' did not equate to fast enough. The only 'opponent' to cause a delay in his progress was his own team-mate Sergio Perez.

I'll probably be seen as a heretic, but give praise when it is due, not this over-the-top display.

Neil Davey
Newport, South Wales

Time to look into F1 mirrors

I find it surprising that Formula 1 cars still use mirrors that are very limited in their ability, when new lorries and buses now use cameras and most new cars have blind-spot warnings to show overtaking vehicles. Would it be so difficult to replace mirrors with cameras, which can be placed in a less venerable position with a warning arrangement to show if a car is alongside?

This simple change would stop cars being overtaken pulling over or turning in on an overtaking car, and also stop the overtaking car pulling in to soon. This is not a perfect arrangement — when cars being overtaken run out of track, accidents will happen, but it will make decisions easier to enforce because the drivers will know if a car is alongside when turning in.

N Reason
Magor, Monmouthshire

See our tech round-up on page 27 for the latest on F1 mirrors — ed

Have your say, get in touch

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FORMULA 1

DUTCH HOME HERO HOLDS OFF MERCEDES

Max Verstappen predictably won again at Zandvoort but Mercedes — not Ferrari — made him work harder than expected

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY **RED BULL** AND motorsport IMAGES

Verstappen takes the flag for his 10th win of 2022, extending his points lead to 109…

Verstappen leads the Ferraris of Leclerc and Sainz through the banked Hugenholtz early on

It was very tense and it required driving perfection, but Max Verstappen's triumph in the 2021 Dutch Grand Prix was strategically straightforward. His repeat victory in the 2022 race at Zandvoort was very much not. The home hero left with an extended points lead over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, but it was actually the resurgent Mercedes squad that put Red Bull most at risk of a shock defeat.

That all followed Verstappen's team needing to put in serious overnight set-up work back at its factory to recover from his lost FP1 running on Friday. Red Bull's efforts — and Leclerc losing the rear of his Ferrari when it mattered most in Q3 going through the long Turn 10 hairpin for the final time — meant Verstappen again headed the Zandvoort grid.

He lined up on pole alongside Leclerc, both starting on the soft tyres most teams had concentrated on understanding during FP2, which was disrupted by the Formula 1 organisation losing its data link to its Biggin Hill base and the teams therefore being unable to immediately piece together their rivals' long-run lap times. But they were later able to re-engineer the pace picture when the timing data was eventually released, and that work and the qualifying result pointed towards another Red Bull versus Ferrari victory fight. Indeed, Verstappen and Leclerc angled their machines towards each other's projection path for leaving the line, with the Ferrari making the slightly better launch when the lights went out. But Verstappen acted decisively, chopping across to the inside on the run to Tarzan and sealing the lead for the opening phase.

Behind, Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton and George Russell were having rather more dramatic starts, the two W13s shod with medium Pirellis for the first stint. Hamilton dived inside Carlos Sainz's third place for the first corner, but moved with such speed that he glanced the Ferrari's right-hand sidepod and was fortunate to stay pointing forwards. Behind, Russell was squeezed behind McLaren's Lando Norris at the second corner.

Verstappen escaped to a 0.7-second lead by the end of lap one of 72 and continued to gap Leclerc. He had a 1.5s advantage at the end of lap three, but then Leclerc began to home back in, getting to 1.1s adrift three tours later as they alone ran comfortably in the 1m16s bracket. But here, Verstappen responded in devastating fashion, pulling away by 0.6s in one lap. Leclerc wouldn't get so close again last Sunday.

As the fight at the front settled down, Sainz fell back to 6.3s from his team-mate over the first 12 laps, with Russell also soon quickly back past Norris and chasing Sergio Perez in the second Red Bull.

Hamilton pressured Sainz, but was unable to find a way past in that period, something that Mercedes would recall much later on. But at just 0.6s ahead on lap 13, Ferrari called Sainz in the next time around, team boss Mattia Binotto claiming it had seen "the pitcrew of Mercedes in the pitlane" possibly considering an undercut attempt (highly unlikely given Hamilton's harder tyres).

But it did so when Sainz was "in the last corner and it was too late for the mechanics to be ready", according to Binotto. This resulted in a calamitous 12.7s stop, with Sainz's new left-rear medium initially missing and Perez then running over a stray Ferrari wheelgun as he exited the Red Bull pits from just behind (see page 24).

Sainz's lack of early race pace meant Verstappen and Leclerc were gone up front, but the two Mercedes were now in free air with the Spaniard and Perez removed. "Our plan all along was to try and make a one-stop strategy work if Red Bull and Ferrari went for the two-stop as expected," Mercedes director of trackside engineering Andrew Shovlin would later explain. "That would have given us the best chance of fighting for the win."

"HAMILTON WAS FLYING. IT WAS DOWN TO ONE FACTOR – THE HARD WAS THE BEST RUBBER TO HAVE"

That potential was still to become clear, because first Verstappen had to finish off escaping Leclerc. But in the two laps following Sainz's stop, Verstappen gained another 1.5s to run 4.4s clear in the lead. Leclerc then pitted on lap 17. "Our pace on the soft was really good at the beginning," Leclerc said afterwards. "We had used tyres [for the first stint], Max was on new, so I think the difference was more or less what we expected. But then, on the new medium, we were slower than expected..."

The two leaders were running that compound after pitting to exchange their softs for mediums on laps 17 and 18 respectively, having managed their pace on full tanks while using the softest compound. They would have to do so again for the second stint, with thermal degradation the only challenge on the Pirellis all race — no graining or blisters were spotted. And Verstappen did it much better.

Having edged to a 4.9s lead — his stop was 0.9s slower than Leclerc's, but his in-lap was 0.7s more rapid — Verstappen then dropped the Ferrari even more. By the end of lap 28 the difference was 6.9s and the Dutchman was facing a new threat — and had just overtaken his 'new' rival's team-mate: Russell.

After assuming the race lead, Hamilton had continued to show strong pace in the 1m16s in clean air. Verstappen, meanwhile, was homing back towards the net lead, easily getting past Russell with a simple DRS-assisted blast to the outside of Tarzan. But it was clear that the Red Bull star couldn't take the medium tyres to the finish. Mercedes, however, was going to attempt to go non-stop for the bulk of the race, with the hard rubber being lined up for both cars.

Hamilton made his pitstop on lap 29, with Russell following suit two tours later. The gap from Verstappen to Hamilton was 20s when the older Briton rejoined and he was now behind Perez too, thanks to the undercut power of the Mexican's two-stop strategy.

But here Hamilton started flying. And it was down to a single factor — the hard was the best rubber to have. Mercedes' decision to use it for a one-stopper was "rolling the dice", said Russell, after no team had explored using the white-walled rubber in the FP2 long-run practice.

This gamble paid off handsomely because when the Zandvoort track rubbered up considerably across the weekend and during the race — something Russell had predicted early on in Sunday's proceedings — the hard tyre had "degradation close to zero", according to Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola. "The hard had the possibility to push without any management because it was very consistent," he explained, adding that the ultimate pace gap between the hard and medium was just half a second and not the pre-event expectation of 1.2-1.3s. "But on the medium and the soft clearly they had to manage."

Hamilton's pace was now so strong that he needed just five laps to eradicate basically all of a 5.3s gap to Perez, at the same time closing his post-pitstop difference to Verstappen to 17.1s. With no degradation and the Mercedes drivers therefore "pushing absolutely flat-out", in the words of Russell, Red Bull needed its rear-gunner to delay Hamilton for as long as he could. Very 2021.

On lap 36, while Russell was going so quickly in fifth place on his hard tyres that he set the fastest lap to date, Hamilton attacked Perez. He got an excellent run to force his way alongside into Tarzan, where the Red Bull locked up heavily. Perez recovered his momentum and the slide wide even aided his defence against Hamilton on the exit of the right-handed hairpin's, because he could run the Mercedes out to the edge of the track and force his rival to back out or risk falling off. This was something Perez himself would later get wrong in a battle with Sainz.

Hamilton then had a second look at passing into the short Turn 11 90-degree right at the end of the back straight and the entry to the track's stadium-like sequence. Perez was more easily able to rebuff that move, but he was defenceless the next time into the first corner and Hamilton was through — although not out of time-loss danger.

Sebastian Vettel had emerged from the pits in his lapped Aston Martin and, despite blue flags being shown to the German, he took from the pit exit to the run down from the Scheivlak Turn 7 »

Winning move: Verstappen prepares to pass Hamilton *just* after the line at the restart

plunge to make way. In the meantime, Perez dived to the low line around Hugenholtz, but Hamilton held on before Vettel finally obliged and pulled over. This, and Perez's defence, won Verstappen back all the 2.9s Hamilton had previously gained.

Next up for Hamilton's hard-tyre charge was Leclerc and his 10.6s advantage, with Russell quickly and more easily overcoming Perez in the lead Mercedes' wake. Over the next seven laps, Hamilton eroded that gap to 4.5s, by which time Ferrari had decided it had seen enough of Mercedes' pace to know that the hard was performing better than expected — Fernando Alonso and Norris were also going along very nicely on the same compound in the pack behind — and so called its charge in for a second time.

Now, Red Bull knew the challenge it faced. "As soon as they swapped to the hard, I was quite interested to see their pace," Verstappen said of Mercedes. "Because I never really wanted to go to a hard tyre. But when I heard the lap times, I was like 'that's quite quick'. And I was trying to push up a bit. But they were still a few tenths faster. Very surprising that they made that tyre work around here."

"The two-stop going into the race was the faster race," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner also explained. "We had the new set of tyres with Max that we felt best strategically to use to make sure we got the best start and using that first stint.

"The pace of the Mercedes seemed pretty strong on the hard tyre, but they had a huge stint to do on it. At that point in time, we were going to go probably back to the soft tyre [at Verstappen's planned second stop]. We knew we'd probably concede track position, but we'd have the pace with the offset."

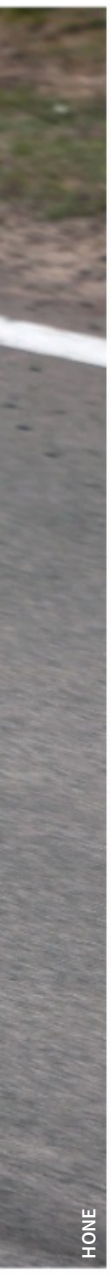
Verstappen would indeed get a second stop, but not for the rubber he wanted — nor in circumstances he and Red Bull could have predicted. On lap 44, with Verstappen's lead over Hamilton soon to be down to 14.7s, Yuki Tsunoda pulled his AlphaTauri over at the exit of the Turn 4 rapid right above Hugenholtz, fearing one of the hards that had just been fitted to his car was not on properly. When his team assured him everything was fine, Tsunoda got going again, albeit after loosening his seatbelts in anticipation of climbing out. So this required a return to the pits to have the belts retightened — they were never unlocked, found the stewards when they looked into reprimanding Tsunoda.

But when Tsunoda headed back out of the pits, he felt again "like only one wheel was having wheelspin", and that he was "drifting" and "counter-steering on the straight". He was ordered by AlphaTauri to pull over, this time further around Turn 4 and on the opposite side of the track. The stewards' investigation into his seatbelt infraction later confirmed the cause was a suspected "problem with the differential". At the time of writing, AlphaTauri is conducting its own investigation into what went wrong, having subsequently told team-mate Pierre Gasly to perform a complex steering-wheel default adjustment to avoid having the same issue.

"I SAW THE SOFT TYRES WERE OUT FOR GEORGE AND IN THAT MOMENT MY HEART WAS SINKING"

When Tsunoda parked up for the second time it led to the FIA activating the virtual safety car, which took the pressure right off Verstappen and Red Bull, despite Horner's assertion that the VSC "couldn't have really come at a worse moment". This feeling was just down to Red Bull having to fit the hards Verstappen ideally wanted to avoid as he said he was "just a bit more competitive on the softer compounds" than any rivals. But the 10s gain of stopping under a VSC was too lucrative — so much that Mercedes also brought Hamilton and Russell in to switch back to new mediums in a neat double-stack. After the VSC ended on lap 50, Verstappen led Hamilton by 12.6s.

Over the next five laps, with the crescendo that had been building now rather punctured, that gap came down to 10.8s as Hamilton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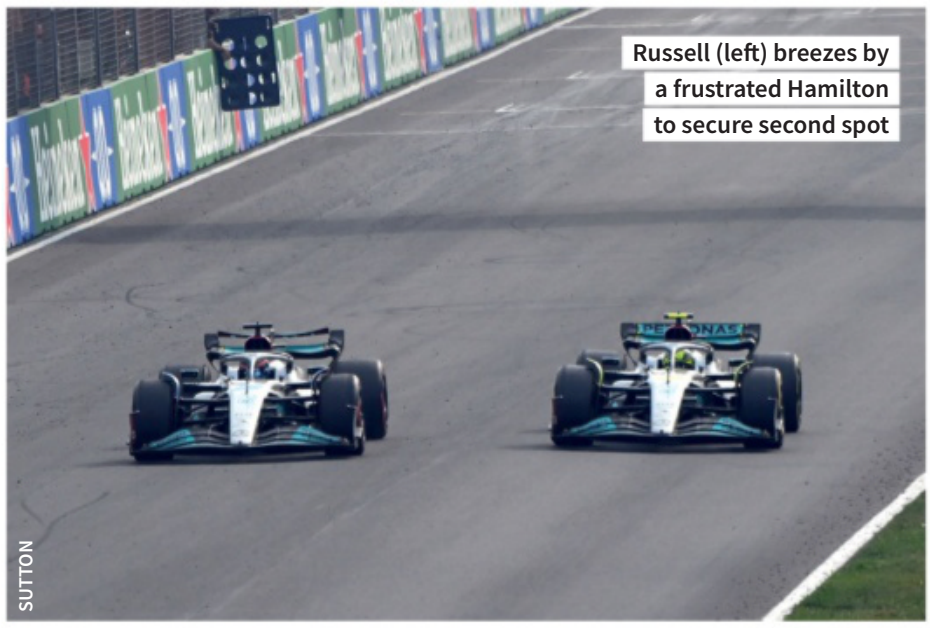
MAUGER

Trouble passing Sainz influenced Mercedes' Hamilton strategy later


SUTTON

Russell (left) breezes by a frustrated Hamilton to secure second spot

nevertheless relentlessly charged. Then another wave of drama occurred. On lap 55, the lapped Valtteri Bottas had lost power aboard his Alfa Romeo and pulled over on the approach to Tarzan, dropping him out of 13th. This required a full safety car activation so that the on-fire car could be shifted, leading to a series of race-defining calls.

First, Red Bull pitted Verstappen from the lead. Mercedes left its cars out, Hamilton cycling into first and Russell beating the long-time leader to second at the second safety car line at the pit exit. But Red Bull had a plan. "We saw the pace of the Mercedes on the medium versus ourselves on a hard and we felt that with the warm-up [being slower on the harder tyre], we'd just have Max exposed," Horner explained, knowing that had Verstappen stayed out Mercedes would have done the opposite and that, in going back to the softs, his driver was on his preferred compound. "So, better to go attack than trying to hang on at the front."

Red Bull was also convinced that Mercedes would "leave George out strategically as a rear-gunner for Lewis", said Horner. But it, and others, including Hamilton, were stunned when it did not. Russell, "losing the tyre [temperature]", had decisively called his team to "put the soft on" the second time past the pits under the safety car, which it agreed to very late — in fact just as he reached the pitlane entry line, the whole pack following the safety car through the pits to allow the marshals room and time to get Bottas's car removed.

"When I pulled past my pitbox I saw the soft tyres were out and I saw it was happening for George and in that moment my heart was sinking," said Hamilton, as things got very Abu Dhabi 2021 very quickly. Mercedes was in a quandary whatever it did here.

Horner was "quite surprised" it removed Russell as a potential blocker, but the younger Briton was aware that he was losing critical temperatures on an already aged set of mediums, with fresh softs "ready immediately" for the upcoming restart, according to Isola.

Hamilton and Mercedes did not converse on doing what Russell eventually did, but team boss Toto Wolff acknowledged that "on a »

QUALIFYING

SUTTON

Qualifying at Zandvoort had many of the greatest hits of the 2022 Formula 1 season. Max Verstappen overcoming Red Bull deficiencies at the last, Sergio Perez spinning and ruining better laps behind. And a tiny Charles Leclerc mistake being very costly.

The form book heading into qualifying suggested a three-way fight for pole after Ferrari and Mercedes had split the practice pace, while Red Bull was on the back foot from the off after Verstappen's 'Friday' practice gearbox broke just 10 minutes into FP1, stunning the home crowd. But his imperious 2022 results meant he was never counted out…

Indeed, a resurgent run to a popular home pole looked like being qualifying's story when Verstappen needed just one go in each segment to top Q1 and traverse Q2. At this stage, Ferrari's session had been "much more tricky", said Leclerc. He in particular struggled with understeer on empty tanks, something he would later reveal has been plaguing him in qualifying at recent events. But an altered approach to out-lap tyre prep changed things for Maranello when it really mattered.

Leclerc blitzed to the top time in Q3's first runs, his 1m10.456s leading Verstappen by 0.059s. Suddenly the championship leader was under severe pressure as Leclerc finally reached his peak, as he has so often in qualifying this year. As the cars exited the pits for the final goes, orange smoke billowed from a flare chucked by a moron in the crowd. Unlike in Q2, halted by the similar actions of another idiot in the grandstand at the exit of Turn 12, the flare stayed under the pit exit wall and was covered by a brief yellow flag.

"LECLERC FINALLY REACHED HIS PEAK, AS HE HAS SO OFTEN IN QUALIFYING THIS YEAR"

Leclerc led the way in the snake. He set the quickest Q3 time in the first sector, but when he reached the windy Turn 10, where he had struggled in practice (see p22), he briefly "lost the rear". Correcting the oversteer snap cost him "a tenth". Despite following that by topping the final sector, it cost him pole.

Verstappen "was a bit compromised" with out-lap traffic (Mick Schumacher, brilliant to reach Q3 and eventually take eighth just ahead), and started the first sector with "tyres that were not really switched on". But this paid him back with extra tyre life in the middle sector, just where he could edge Leclerc. The result was a 1m10.342s, and a 0.021s advantage.

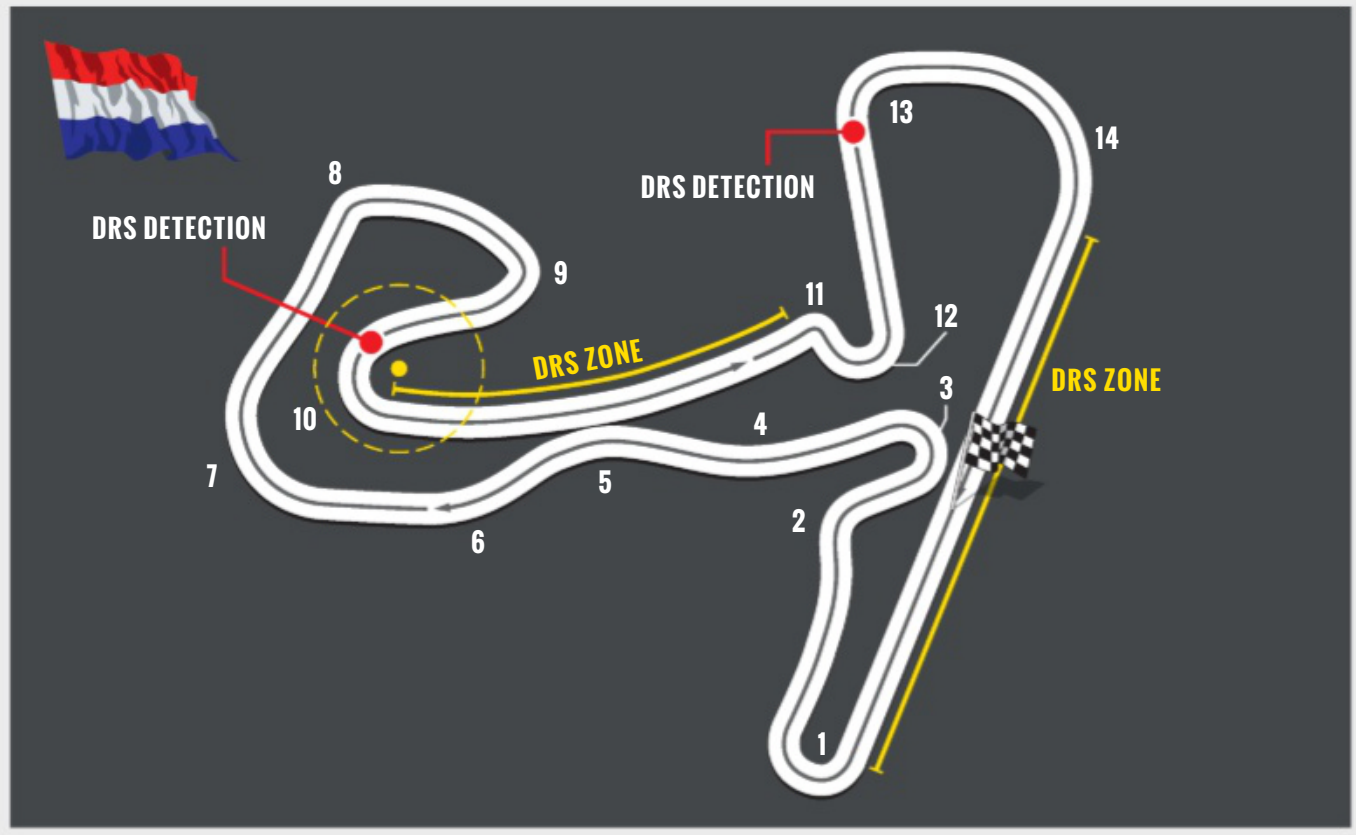
Behind the usual top two, Perez dipped his wheels in the gravel exiting the penultimate corner after hitting the gas too hard and spun to the inside. Carlos Sainz, running ahead, was able to complete his lap and grab third, but Lewis Hamilton and George Russell were thwarted, having to lift. They ended up fourth and sixth with the rueful Perez in between.

TRACKSIDE VIEW

Zandvoort isn't just all about banking – no matter the enduring appeal of the awesome Hugenholtz, nor the new spectacle of the 2022 Formula 1 machines running through the final corner with DRS activated.

Autosport has again gone back into nature at the start of opening practice. We want to find a less-discussed but still vital section of the 2.65-mile track, so we climb across the dunes to reach the outside of the Turn 10 long, left-hand hairpin, where the cars turn across the usual North Sea wind and require a solid front end. On the way, a hare skips through the undergrowth behind the rapid Turn 7 Scheivlak right and later we're festooned with yellow ladybirds. But the big beasts are already rumbling – the ground-effects cars getting to grips discovering their latest new environment.

From our vantage point, the exit of the preceding Turn 9 is also visible. It's a tricky double-apex right, coming at the end of the ultra-fast, thrilling narrow run from Hugenholtz all the way through to mid-way around the second sector where the cars are braking from near top speed. There are two main challenges – hugging the white line around the outside of the second apex without going over, and then catching any oversteer snaps that follow the power going down when the rear is booted around as the drivers aim to get in shape for



"IT REMINDS HOW QUICKLY THIS CIRCUIT CAN BITE IN RESPONSE TO ANY SLIGHT ERROR"

Turn 10 by quickly swinging right.

Daniel Ricciardo comes a cropper with the first Turn 9 exit challenge as the opening 10 minutes of FP1 ends, shortly before Max Verstappen's gearbox failure causes a lengthy red flag. The McLaren driver understeers slightly as he flirts with the white line – it's enough to slide wide onto the dust and grass beyond, clipping a Turn 10 braking marker board as his excursion continues. The Australian's efforts mean that when Sergio Perez does likewise 20 minutes later, there's no polystyrene to hit – the marshals have cleared the debris during the stoppage. But Perez ends up so close to the wall it's a reminder of how quickly this circuit can bite in response to any slight error.

Sebastian Vettel and Alex Albon are lighting up their rears most coming out of Turn 9 in the opening half of FP1 but, when it comes to nailing Turn 10, no one looks more at ease than Carlos Sainz. In the other Ferrari, Charles Leclerc is regularly needing two bites of the wheel, while McLaren's Lando Norris can't find a consistent line all session.

The difficulty at this point is keeping the car planted having swept right and braked sharply before the Turn 10 left entry. Late on, Valtteri Bottas demonstrates what can happen if that braking comes even a fraction too late – an oversteer snap sends his Alfa Romeo wide and wild. A fitting place, all things considered.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Unlike his team-mate, Leclerc looks less at ease through Turn 10

Perez comes perilously close to the wall during Turn 9 exit excursion

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

There was enormous home support for Verstappen all weekend

GETTY IMAGES / CLIVE MASON / STALEY

par with the same tyre, we couldn't have overtaken the Red Bull with the straightline speed" differences between the draggy Mercedes and slippery, efficient Red Bull. In the race's speed trap classification, Verstappen hit 203.1mph to Hamilton's 195.9mph…

Wolff also added: "With Sainz, who had less pace, we weren't really able to pass him at the beginning. So that was the call. Every single day of my life, I'd rather risk everything for winning the race, rather than cementing in second and third."

So, with lapped cars having been allowed to overtake, Hamilton lined up for the laps 60-61 restart knowing he faced having to hold back Verstappen on fresh softs against his eight-laps-older mediums. He insisted being "late to get to race mode [engine setting]" was no hindrance, but the restart battle just wasn't a contest. Verstappen was so fast down the straight that he nearly erred in passing Hamilton before the finish line, but in fact judged it to perfection by 0.016s and then barrelled back to first by the Tarzan entry. Home fans delighted, he roared off, gapping Hamilton by 1.7s in a single lap back at racing speed.

"I'D RATHER RISK EVERYTHING FOR WINNING THE RACE, RATHER THAN CEMENTING IN SECOND AND THIRD"

RED BULL

Verstappen and Russell share a joke after taking the top two places

Russell then passed the fuming Hamilton at the very start of lap 64. The DRS move "could've been a bit nasty", related the Mercedes works newbie, as "a bit of confusion" meant he "came out [to the right] just as he [Hamilton] defended". But a check-up off the gas avoided disaster for Russell and he powered past his team-mate.

Two laps later, Leclerc, who was initially convinced that the two Mercedes cars did make contact, likewise did the same.

He'd hassled Russell at the restart. There, the recovering Sainz also repassed Perez (the only other driver to face the restart on mediums, having been given them at his safety car stop) and set off their late battle, during which Perez showed he'd not learned from Hamilton's sensible concession exiting Tarzan much earlier on. Leclerc then followed Russell up to Hamilton and rescued a podium that looked lost to Ferrari due to its unfortunate pre-VSC stop timing.

Topping the podium was Verstappen, with the fastest lap set on the second lap post-safety car to boot. His championship lead is now 109 points and a second title coronation all but inevitable.

"It's always special to win your home grand prix," he concluded. "It was already last year. This year, I had to work for it even more."

NEXT F1 REPORT

ITALIAN GRAND PRIX
15 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

BIZARRE END TO TSUNODA'S DUTCH GP

Yuki Tsunoda felt he was "drifting on the straight", which is why he initially pulled up in his AlphaTauri only to then trundle back to the pits, have his belts tightened, continue and then finally retire to trigger a virtual safety car.

The second-year F1 driver had started ninth and was occupying 10th when he pitted for a second time on lap 42 to ditch his ageing medium tyres. But upon rejoining, he felt there was "only one wheel that was having wheelspin". At the time, Tsunoda reported that he didn't feel as though the tyres had been properly fitted during the stop.

That prompted him and his race engineer to converse, before Tsunoda took the initiative and parked up for the first time to bring out the yellow flags. After 30 seconds, with the data not revealing anything untoward, he did eventually continue to the pits. Anticipating an early bath, Tsunoda loosened his belts, hence the TV camera cutting to his mechanics having a rummage in the cockpit before Tsunoda was released. He then stopped for good out on track shortly after "counter-steering on the straight".

The true cause of the failure is being investigated, although it was purportedly differential related. Team-mate Pierre Gasly, meanwhile, counted 26 button presses as he cycled through various modes to avoid a similar fate. He finished 11th.

MAUGER

SUTTON

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Sainz penalised for 'saving someone's life' in pitlane

Carlos Sainz has reason to rue a lost podium since a botched pitstop and penalty combined to cost him 15 seconds in the Dutch GP. Subtract that from his total race time and he might have been third, chasing down George Russell at the flag.

The day began to fall apart on lap 14, when his Ferrari was called in from third to shed soft tyres to combat Lewis Hamilton's sterling pace on the mediums. But the ploy to gain track position was undone when the Ferrari crew emerged without the left-rear tyre as part of a calamitous 12.7s service. Third-starting Sainz resumed down in 11th place. The cause for the "mess", as per team boss Mattia Binotto, was placed on the late call to stop, as the crew didn't have enough time to prepare.

Sainz later escaped the wrath of the stewards for appearing to pass Esteban Ocon under yellow flags at the site of Valtteri Bottas retiring at Tarzan (above). But he was soon deemed bang to rights for an unsafe release, having set off into the path of Fernando Alonso's Alpine. This was blamed on the tight pitlane and positioning of the McLaren pitbox.

Sainz reckoned he was the hero of the hour, rather than the villain. "By the time they released me, it was clearly safe with Fernando," explained Sainz. "But then I had to hit the brakes to not hit a McLaren mechanic that ran into my exit line. It was this braking that generated the 'unsafe release'. I thought I had saved someone's life and not generated a dangerous situation."

As a result, Sainz crossed the line in fifth but was demoted to eighth, which did at least save some face for Sergio Perez. The second Red Bull inherited a top-five finish after failing to match the pace of the sister car, both Mercedes and the Ferraris. Perez did at least help Max Verstappen on his way to victory somewhat by delaying Hamilton from passing into Tarzan by a lap.

TEE

Kevin Magnussen recaps skating over the gravel and clonking the wall on lap two

‘CONFIDENT’ STROLL THWARTED DESPITE IMPRESSIVE PACE

Lance Stroll repeated his first-lap knack from Spa by getting his elbows out to climb two places and settle in eighth during an opening soft-tyre stint. But despite the impressive turn of pace all afternoon, the Aston Martin driver was hurt by the Yuki Tsunoda-induced virtual safety car.

Stroll had made the switch to hard tyres four laps earlier, and the interruption afforded rivals Fernando Alonso, Lando Norris and Esteban Ocon cheaper pitstops to ensure he finished where he started in 10th.

Nevertheless, Stroll reckoned that “our pace was strong all weekend. I felt really confident in the car, and we were more competitive. That is really encouraging for the coming races.”

Aston Martin stablemate Sebastian Vettel, meanwhile, was forced to make amends from a Q1 exit yet again. A slow rear-wheel change undid an undercut attempt before he was penalised for holding up Lewis Hamilton and Sergio Perez through sector one after he rejoined from his second stop.

More points for Alonso as Alpine pulls clear

Sixth place for Fernando Alonso extended the Alpine driver’s points-scoring streak to 10 races.

The Spaniard’s ascent from a lacklustre 13th in qualifying — the two-time champion trailed team-mate Esteban Ocon by one spot on the grid after he was stymied by traffic — also helped Mercedes challenge Max Verstappen for victory. Alonso was the guinea pig, becoming the first driver to brave the surprisingly competitive hard tyres when he pitted on lap 12.

He also managed to keep Lando Norris at bay after the late safety car to cross the line in seventh, gaining a place when Carlos Sainz was penalised.

“It was 70 laps of qualifying today because we could not relax at any point,” Alonso explained. “The start was good, but I lost places on the outside of Turn 1, so I had to fight very hard to recover some. Then we put on the hard and we had to push very hard to make that middle stint work.”

Thanks chiefly to Alonso’s exploits last Sunday, Alpine now sits 24 points ahead of McLaren in the fight for fourth. The cause was further aided by Ocon’s ninth-place finish. But the Frenchman lamented running the soft tyre too long in the opening stint, staying out six laps longer than Alonso.

Q&A

VALTTERI BOTTAS
ALFA ROMEO DRIVER

What did you feel when the car expired?
At the start of the straight, I started to feel a loss of power and then really quickly some really bad noises and a bit of flames from the back. Then the engine switched off. I am waiting for confirmation, but I think it was a power unit issue. There was no sign prior to that, everything was feeling OK.

Prior to the breakdown, you had been climbing the order. Were points in the offing?
That would have been challenging but I think we would have been pretty close. So, at least the race pace was better than the qualifying pace. That’s good to see. But again, in lap one I lost places, so I made my life more difficult. For me, it’s quite a high priority. I need to improve my first laps quite a bit. It’s always disappointing to end a race ahead of time. We had kept progressing. The battle in the midfield was quite good and there was plenty of action. Overtaking at Zandvoort was still difficult, although better than last year with the new generation of cars.

That’s two tricky weekends in a row. How important is it to bounce back at Monza?
It is important because there are not that many races to go, and we want to score more points. But also, being a home race for Alfa Romeo, it would be an important one to have a strong result.

Qualifying left a little to be desired also. What happened?
The feeling with the car wasn’t too bad, but we’re still lacking a bit of pace and grip to be higher up on the grid. We tried everything with the set-up, but what we could find was not fast enough.

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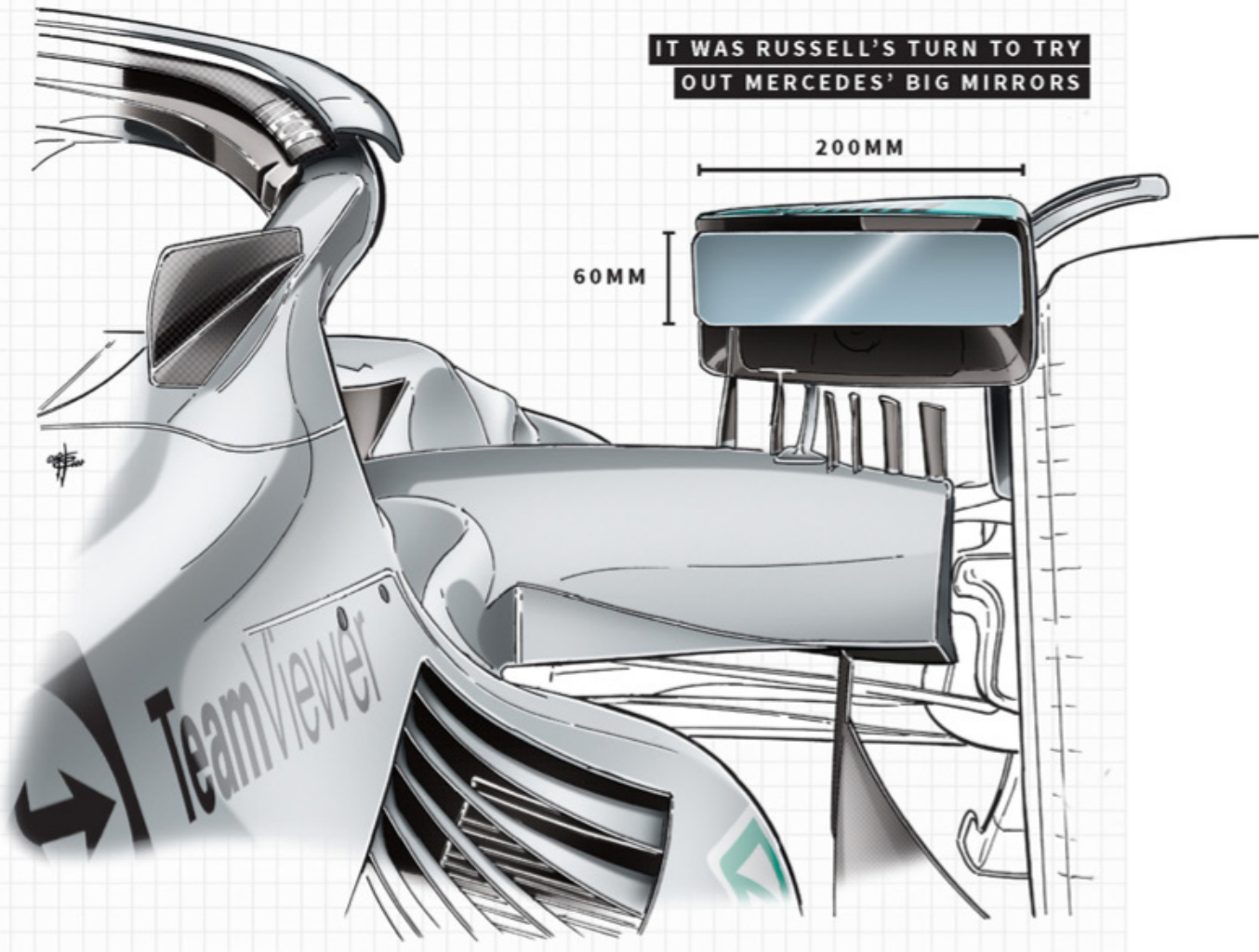
DRAWING BOARD

GIORGIO PIOLA



IT WAS RUSSELL'S TURN TO TRY OUT MERCEDES' BIG MIRRORS

REFLECTING ON AN AGE-OLD PROBLEM

In the event that a Formula 1 driver complains that they struggle to see behind them when out on track, it doesn't reflect well on the design of the mirrors. Mirrors are mandatory on F1 cars, but they rarely amount to anything more than a tick-box exercise and often frustrate the aerodynamicists who have to mitigate their effect on the airflow down the car.

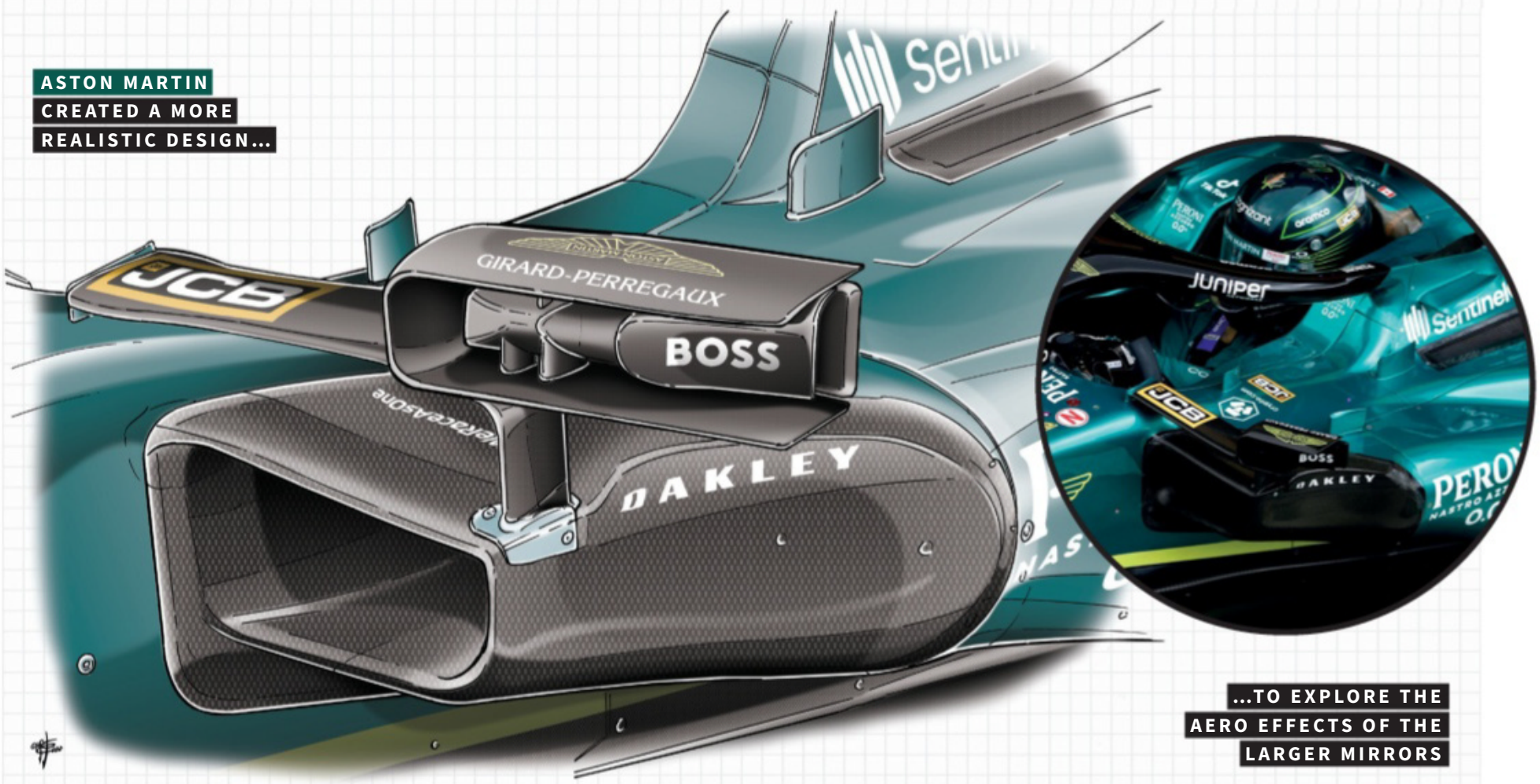
With 2022's revised aerodynamics and larger tyres, getting a good view from the mirrors' reflection appears to be more challenging, so the FIA tasked the teams with testing larger mirrors to see if they provide the view needed. The reflective surface needs to be at least 150mm by 50mm on current cars, but the mirrors trialled in practice were upscaled to 200mm by 60mm to check if the view was better. Since teams rarely like taking time out of their practice sessions to do the FIA's donkeywork, there were variations in the designs' complexity.

Mercedes and Red Bull explored some comically oversized mirror housings that almost resembled the wing mirrors of a standard road car. From a testing standpoint, perhaps neither team viewed it as an exercise in how to optimise the aerodynamics of the solution, but simply create something rudimentary to test whether the view of the rear was enhanced by the larger surface.

Red Bull split its mirrors, running the usual design on the right-hand side and the larger one on the left. Both it and Mercedes had a surplus of space underneath, perhaps looking to explore positioning of the mirror surface for maximum effect. The Silver Arrows had already explored the design at Spa on Lewis Hamilton's car, but George Russell had the chance to try them out at Zandvoort.

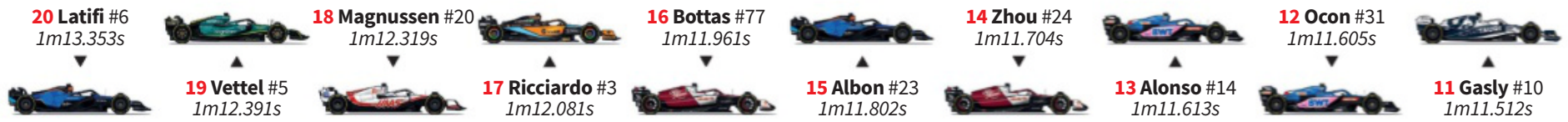
Aston Martin and AlphaTauri took the process a little more seriously, creating bodywork to fit the longer mirrors that was more in line with their regular mirror designs. Aston, in particular, used the slotted mirror housing design with the surrounding winglets in order to explore the effect of having larger mirrors aerodynamically. The bottom winglet was extended outwards, and the supports beefed up in order to handle the larger size. Although any changes are yet to be ratified, the FIA will likely introduce the larger mirrors for 2023.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



ASTON MARTIN CREATED A MORE REALISTIC DESIGN...

...TO EXPLORE THE AERO EFFECTS OF THE LARGER MIRRORS



FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Russell	1m12.455s
2	Hamilton	1m12.695s
3	Sainz	1m12.845s
4	Norris	1m12.929s
5	Ricciardo	1m13.077s
6	Leclerc	1m13.127s
7	Perez	1m13.416s
8	Alonso	1m13.633s
9	Ocon	1m13.963s
10	Albon	1m14.063s
11	Schumacher	1m14.163s
12	Stroll	1m14.257s
13	Magnussen	1m14.405s
14	Gasly	1m14.474s
15	Vettel	1m14.500s
16	Zhou	1m14.534s
17	Tsunoda	1m14.630s
18	Bottas	1m14.695s
19	Verstappen	1m14.714s
20	Latifi	1m15.122s

WEATHER Sunny, air 23-25C track 30-36C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m12.345s
2	Sainz	1m12.349s
3	Hamilton	1m12.417s
4	Norris	1m12.448s
5	Russell	1m12.655s
6	Stroll	1m12.746s
7	Alonso	1m12.848s
8	Verstappen	1m13.042s
9	Ocon	1m13.305s
10	Ricciardo	1m13.362s
11	Tsunoda	1m13.419s
12	Perez	1m13.493s
13	Schumacher	1m13.604s
14	Vettel	1m13.611s
15	Zhou	1m13.624s
16	Gasly	1m13.666s
17	Albon	1m13.837s
18	Bottas	1m14.167s
19	Magnussen	1m14.282s
20	Latifi	1m14.797s

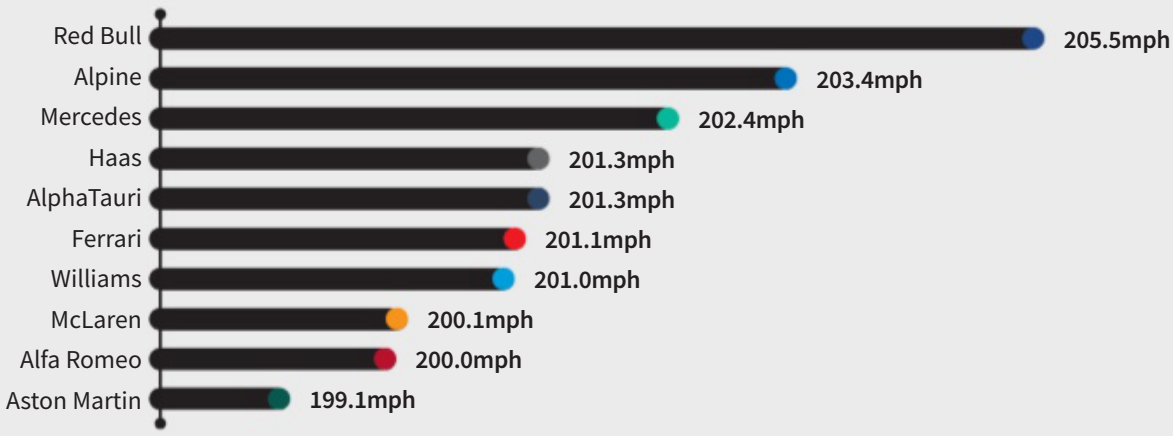
WEATHER Sunny, air 26-27C track 35-36C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m11.632s
2	Russell	1m11.698s
3	Verstappen	1m11.793s
4	Sainz	1m11.971s
5	Hamilton	1m12.156s
6	Perez	1m12.176s
7	Alonso	1m12.327s
8	Vettel	1m12.491s
9	Schumacher	1m12.558s
10	Norris	1m12.591s
11	Magnussen	1m12.606s
12	Stroll	1m12.773s
13	Albon	1m12.775s
14	Ocon	1m13.003s
15	Gasly	1m13.046s
16	Tsunoda	1m13.256s
17	Ricciardo	1m13.299s
18	Bottas	1m13.359s
19	Zhou	1m13.421s
20	Latifi	1m13.625s

WEATHER Sunny, air 24-27C track 33-37C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m11.317s
2	Hamilton	1m11.331s
3	Tsunoda	1m11.427s
4	Leclerc	1m11.443s
5	Norris	1m11.556s
6	Russell	1m11.561s
7	Stroll	1m11.568s
8	Perez	1m11.641s
9	Alonso	1m11.667s
10	Albon	1m11.695s
11	Gasly	1m11.705s
12	Schumacher	1m11.741s
13	Ocon	1m11.748s
14	Sainz	1m11.767s
15	Zhou	1m11.826s
16	Bottas	1m11.961s
17	Ricciardo	1m12.081s
18	Magnussen	1m12.319s
19	Vettel	1m12.391s
20	Latifi	1m13.353s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sainz	1m10.814s
2	Russell	1m10.824s
3	Verstappen	1m10.927s
4	Leclerc	1m10.988s
5	Hamilton	1m11.075s
6	Norris	1m11.116s
7	Perez	1m11.314s
8	Stroll	1m11.416s
9	Schumacher	1m11.420s
10	Tsunoda	1m11.428s
11	Gasly	1m11.512s
12	Ocon	1m11.605s
13	Alonso	1m11.613s
14	Zhou	1m11.704s
15	Albon	1m11.802s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Verstappen	1m10.342s
2	Leclerc	1m10.363s
3	Sainz	1m10.434s
4	Hamilton	1m10.648s
5	Perez	1m11.077s
6	Russell	1m11.147s
7	Norris	1m11.174s
8	Schumacher	1m11.442s
9	Tsunoda	1m12.556s
10	Stroll	no time

WEATHER Sunny, air 29-30C track 40-41C

NEXT RACE
11 SEPTEMBER
ITALIAN GP
Monza

SEASON STATS

	DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP	PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Verstappen	310	1	1
2	Leclerc	201	1	1
3	Perez	201	1	1
4	Russell	188	2	1
5	Sainz	175	1	1
6	Hamilton	158	2	4
7	Norris	82	3	3
8	Ocon	66	5	5
9	Alonso	59	5	2
10	Bottas	46	5	5
11	Magnussen	22	5	4
12	Vettel	20	6	9
13	Ricciardo	19	6	6
14	Gasly	18	5	6
15	Schumacher	12	6	6
16	Tsunoda	11	7	8
17	Zhou	5	8	9
18	Stroll	5	10	10
19	Albon	4	9	9
20	Latifi	0	12	10
21	Hulkenberg	0	12	17

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Red Bull	511
2	Ferrari	376
3	Mercedes	346
4	Alpine	125
5	McLaren	101
6	Alfa Romeo	51
7	Haas	34
8	AlphaTauri	29
9	Aston Martin	25
10	Williams	4

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**8**	6	Russell
Verstappen	**12**	3	Perez
Leclerc	**10**	3	Sainz
Ricciardo	1	**13**	**Norris**
Alonso	6	**7**	**Ocon**
Gasly	**8**	6	Tsunoda
Vettel	**8**	5	Stroll
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Latifi	2	**12**	**Albon**
Zhou	4	**10**	**Bottas**
Magnussen	**11**	4	Schumacher

Based on Q1/Q2/Q3 sessions, not sprint races. Events removed when one driver in a team could not record a representative time for reasons outside their control

WINS

Verstappen	10
Leclerc	3
Perez	1
Sainz	1

POLE POSITIONS

Leclerc	7
Verstappen	4
Sainz	2
Perez	1
Russell	1

FASTEST LAPS

Verstappen	5
Leclerc	3
Hamilton	2
Perez	2
Sainz	2
Norris	1

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STARTING GRID

10 Stroll #18 *no Q3 time*	**9** Tsunoda #22 *1m12.556s*	**8** Schumacher #47 *1m11.442s*	**7** Norris #4 *1m11.174s*	**6** Russell #63 *1m11.147s*	**5** Perez #11 *1m11.077s*	**4** Hamilton #44 *1m10.648s*	**3** Sainz #55 *1m10.434s*	**2** Leclerc #16 *1m10.363s*	**1** Verstappen #1 *1m10.342s*

RACE RESULTS ROUND 15/22 (72 LAPS – 190.50 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull	1h36m42.773s	58	**S**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**u
2	**George Russell** (GBR)	Mercedes	+4.071s		**M**n, **H**n, **M**n, **S**u
3	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	+10.929s		**S**u, **M**n, **H**n, **S**u
4	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	+13.016s	14	**M**n, **H**n, **M**n
5	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Red Bull	+18.168s		**S**u, **M**n, **H**n, **M**n
6	**Fernando Alonso** (ESP)	Alpine-Renault	+18.754s		**S**n, **H**n, **S**n
7	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Mercedes	+19.306s		**M**n, **H**n, **S**u, **S**u
8	**Carlos Sainz** (ESP)	Ferrari	+20.916s		**S**u, **M**n, **H**n, **S**u
9	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Alpine-Renault	+21.117s		**S**n, **H**n, **S**u
10	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+22.459s		**S**n, **M**u, **H**u, **S**u
11	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	+27.009s		**S**u, **M**u, **H**u, **S**n
12	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Williams-Mercedes	+30.390s		**M**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**n
13	**Mick Schumacher** (DEU)	Haas-Ferrari	+32.995s		**M**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**u
14	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+36.007s		**S**n, **M**u, **H**u, **S**n
15	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	+36.869s		**M**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**u
16	**Zhou Guanyu** (CHN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+37.320s		**S**n, **S**u, **M**n, **S**u
17	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	McLaren-Mercedes	+37.764s		**S**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**n, **S**n
18	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap/+42.078s		**S**n, **M**n, **H**n, **S**n
R	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	53 laps-engine		**S**n, **S**n, **M**n
R	**Yuki Tsunoda** (JPN)	AlphaTauri-Red Bull	43 laps-differential		**S**u, **M**u, **H**n, **S**u

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Verstappen**	1m13.652s	-	62
2	**Russell**	1m13.671s	+0.019s	72
3	**Hamilton**	1m13.854s	+0.202s	54
4	**Alonso**	1m14.144s	+0.492s	51
5	**Perez**	1m14.404s	+0.752s	63
6	**Leclerc**	1m14.413s	+0.761s	62
7	**Sainz**	1m14.643s	+0.991s	63
8	**Norris**	1m14.706s	+1.054s	63
9	**Vettel**	1m14.862s	+1.210s	50
10	**Stroll**	1m15.043s	+1.391s	65
11	**Ocon**	1m15.084s	+1.432s	64
12	**Gasly**	1m15.165s	+1.513s	65
13	**Schumacher**	1m15.233s	+1.581s	51
14	**Magnussen**	1m15.369s	+1.717s	53
15	**Albon**	1m15.534s	+1.882s	65
16	**Ricciardo**	1m15.577s	+1.925s	52
17	**Zhou**	1m15.940s	+2.288s	63
18	**Latifi**	1m16.066s	+2.414s	62
19	**Bottas**	1m16.844s	+3.192s	51
20	**Tsunoda**	1m17.138s	+3.486s	16

WEATHER Overcast, air 23-25C track 33-34C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 118.187mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 129.353mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set

RACE BRIEFING

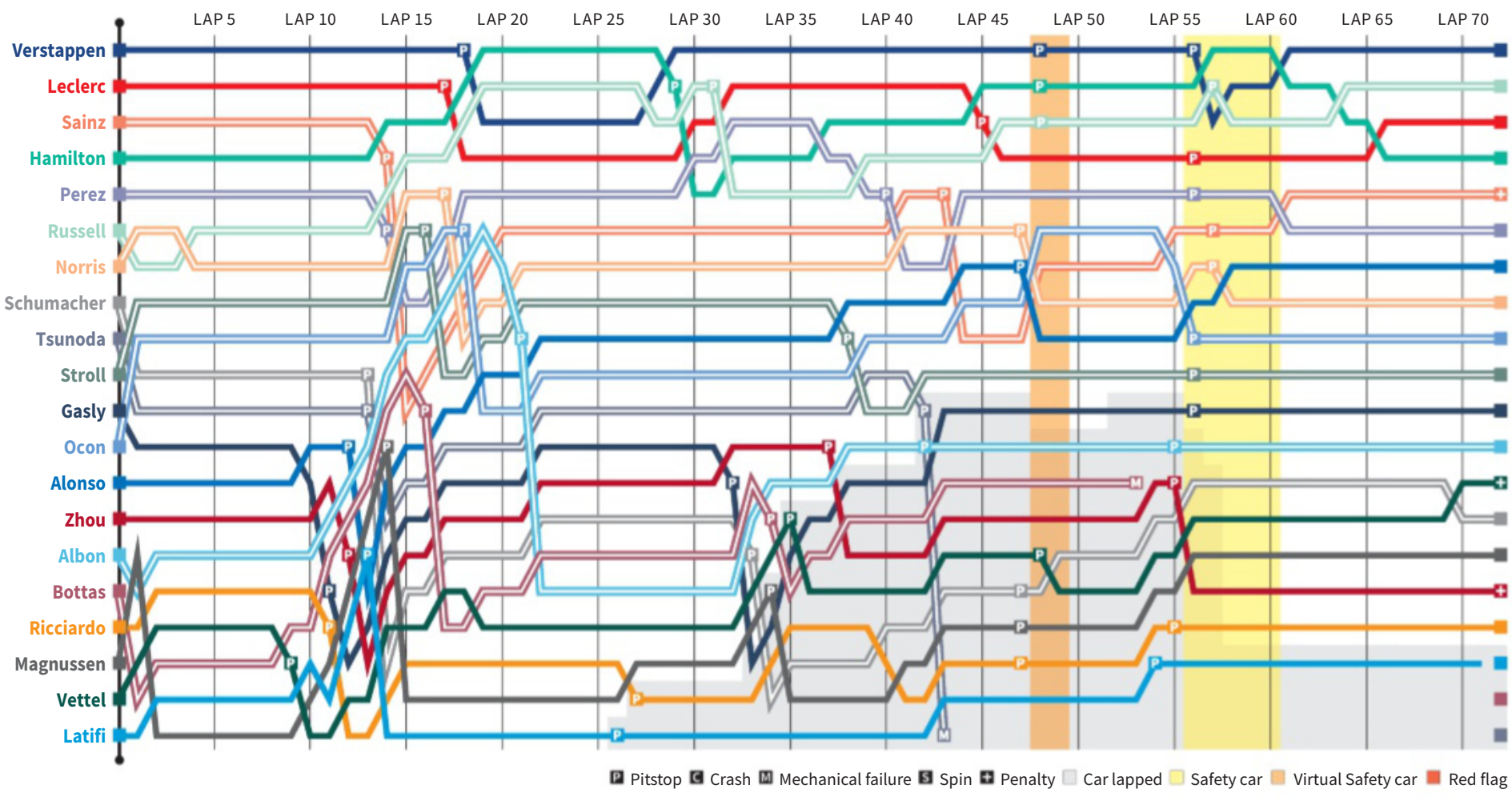
RACE PENALTIES

ZHOU Five-second penalty for pitlane speeding
VETTEL 5s penalty and one licence point for ignoring blue flags
SAINZ 5s penalty for unsafe release

STAT 30
Verstappen has 30 F1 victories from 156 starts

STAT 19
Leclerc now has as many world championship F1 podiums as Mario Andretti

LAP CHART What happened, when



TOP-SCORER VERSTAPPEN DELIVERS AT ZANDVOORT

Another weekend of domination for the driver carrying #1, while it's kudos for a resurgent Mercedes duo, and Lance Stroll

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES

LEWIS HAMILTON

Started **4th** — Result **4th**

9 Had Perez not spun in Q3, likely was a real pole threat. Race pace on planned one-stopper was brilliant and it surely would have been close to pressure Verstappen's two-stop. Hitting Sainz at Tarzan and not leaving it until closer to the line before lighting up the safety car restart costs the maximum.

GEORGE RUSSELL

Started **6th** — Result **2nd**

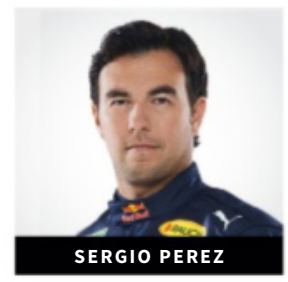
9 Can't score the maximum because Q3 banker was slower than Hamilton and Perez, and for being edged out by Norris into second turn on lap one. But recovery and pace on harder compounds was brilliant. Plus, his safety car soft tyres call ensured a Mercedes could take second.

RED BULL

MAX VERSTAPPEN

Started **1st** — Result **1st**

10 Yet another brilliant display. Edged Leclerc for pole, then held him off at the start. Seemed to have bags of spare pace in early stages managing the softs, and was quick enough on the mediums that Mercedes' one-stop remained audacious. Judged the restart to perfection.



SERGIO PEREZ

Started **5th** — Result **5th**

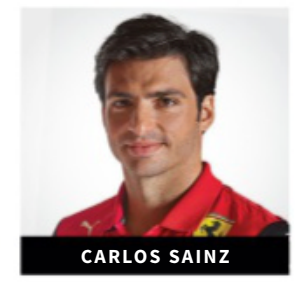
4 Main reason for low score versus Verstappen is because of how comparatively slow he was over race duration, which he put down to struggling to keep tyres alive pre-VSC. Also spun after hitting the gas too early at the penultimate corner in Q3, and botched his outside-Tarzan attack on Sainz.

FERRARI

CHARLES LECLERC

Started **2nd** — Result **3rd**

8 Returned to being Ferrari's lead threat after a few off events. But Turn 10 error in the wind cost pole and harms score here, with lack of pace against Verstappen on softs and mediums doing the rest. Unfortunate with the VSC timing to drop behind the two Mercedes, but did pounce to beat one.



CARLOS SAINZ

Started **3rd** — Result **8th**

6 Was blameless in having to brake hard to avoid a McLaren mechanic while exiting his pitbox in front of Alonso, which earned his penalty. Ocon pass ahead of stranded Bottas was declared fine. Qualified behind Leclerc and was well off his pace in first stint – the main reasons for their score discrepancy.

McLAREN

DANIEL RICCIARDO

Started **17th** – Result **17th**

4 Unfortunate to slide on Turn 13 dust Stroll had kicked up in Q1, undoing his weekend. Retained his starting spot, then felt he lacked pace compared to nearby rivals to sustain attacks. More worryingly, felt he couldn't maintain his best pace on the occasions where he did run in free air.

LANDO NORRIS

Started **7th** — Result **7th**

8 Came close to edging Russell's Q3 banker. Found a way past on lap one but was always going to struggle to stay there. Pace in comparison to Alonso on hard tyres meant the Alpine caught up, then having no new softs left during the VSC meant he also had to stop under the safety car and so fell behind.

ALPINE

FERNANDO ALONSO

Started **13th** — Result **6th**

8 Blamed traffic for Q2 exit. Turn 2 first-lap slide let Gasly back past, before racy progress ensued, then was first driver to fit the hards, on which he showed strong pace. Gained with a VSC stop for new softs, which meant he didn't have to stop under the safety car so finally jumped Norris. Held him off to the flag.

ESTEBAN OCON

Started **12th** — Result **9th**

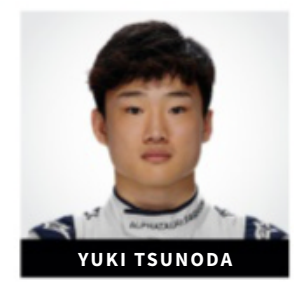
8 Loose rear was blamed for Q2 exit. Gained three spots on lap one. Stopping later than Alonso for hards meant he was undercut, then chased his team-mate before Sainz came past fractionally before reaching the first Bottas-stoppage-covering yellow. Safety car stop helped him seal ninth.

ALPHATAURI

PIERRE GASLY

Started **11th** – Result **11th**

6 Scored down because he was the slower AlphaTauri driver in qualifying, which meant he missed the Q3 cut, and was behind Tsunoda in the race too, struggling for pace. The main reason for this was being unable to keep the medium tyres he took at his first stop alive when running in traffic.

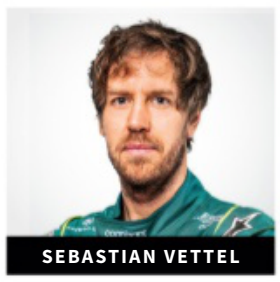


YUKI TSUNODA

Started **9th** — Result **R**

7 Score boosted by reaching Q3. In the race was outmuscled by Stroll at Tarzan and surprised by Ocon's Hugenholtz high-line, which puts a cap on his score as it left him vulnerable to Alonso's undercut. Never got to see how he would have gone on the better hards due to suspected differential problem.

ASTON MARTIN



Started **19th** – Result **14th**

4 Very unlucky to hit the sand/dust his team-mate kicked up in Q1, but put himself at risk of elimination with not-so-good early pace. In the race, Aston tried an early undercut, but lost time with slow rear-wheel change. Ignoring blue flags for so long in front of Hamilton and Perez was poor and rightly penalised.

Started **10th** – Result **10th**

9 Unfortunate to lose hydraulic pressure ahead of Q3 after doing brilliantly to get there. Qualifying efforts fractionally harm his score, though, as it was Q1 wheel-dip on entry to Turn 13 that scattered sand/dust that had Vettel off. Excellent race pace, but unlucky in VSC/safety car stop timing.

WILLIAMS

Started **20th** – Result **18th**

4 Ending up nearly 1s off back of the pack in Q1 wasn't representative, as Williams asked him to abort what had been a rapid-starting final lap due to an engine temperature spike. Low score is essentially down to poor race pace, which came mostly in free air and centred on big tyre degradation.

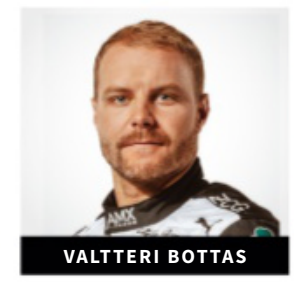
Started **15th** – Result **12th**

7 Made it out of Q1 nicely. Williams insists the flare idiocy didn't cost him a Q3 berth, but more control of the rear might have netted better than 15th. In the race was happy with the mediums he started on, but was unlucky with a pre-VSC second stop and Gasly ahead getting a cheap safety car stop too.

ALFA ROMEO

Started **14th** – Result **16th**

6 On a weekend when Alfa struggled to generate tyre temperature for one-lap pace, he did so better than Bottas to escape Q1, boosting his score. Held starting spot on first tour, then chased Alonso before shedding pace late in first stint. Too fast in the pits at first stop, which hurts his score.



Started **16th** — Result **R**

5 Two things add up to a lower score than his team-mate. One was Q1 elimination, then in the race he was overcome by Ricciardo, Magnussen and Vettel between Turns 4 and 7. Was never a points contender for the rest of the contest, which he exited early due to a fiery power unit problem.

HAAS

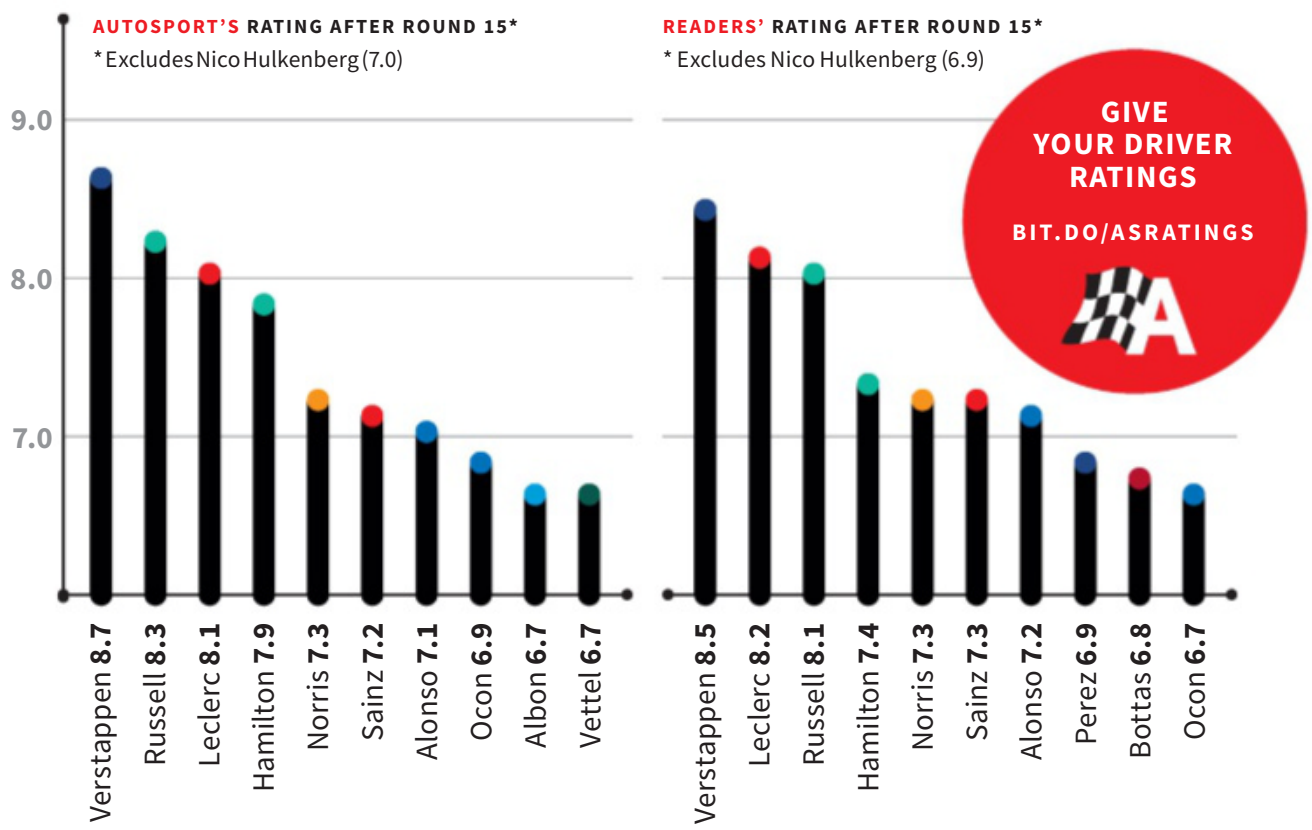
Started **18th** – Result **15th**

3 Couldn't explain why he failed to gain as much as others in Q1 track evolution, and that elimination hurts his score. It lowers even further due to his mistake going off at second turn on lap two, undoing thrilling first-lap Scheivlak double pass on Ricciardo and Albon and putting him last after hitting wall.

Started **8th** — Result **13th**

7 Put excellent qualifying form down to confidence building around a lack of big set-up changes. Nailed going from scrubbed to new softs in Q2 and Q3 to qualify eighth. Timidness cost two spots on lap one, but main reason he fell out of points contention was front jack getting stuck in first stop.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



McLaughlin led 104 of the 110 laps for his third IndyCar victory of 2022

No team orders leaves McLaughlin to beat Power

Scott McLaughlin deserved to win at Portland, but will Penske regret its decision not to help its championship leader Will Power ahead of the Laguna Seca finale?

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Team Penske's Scott McLaughlin won last weekend's Grand Prix of Portland to score his third IndyCar triumph of the season and in dominant fashion. And while he only gained one spot in the points table, he remains technically in the hunt for the championship, 41 points behind the guy who finished right behind him last Sunday.

Should Portland runner-up Will Power win the 2022 IndyCar championship this weekend at Laguna Seca – and he now sits 20 points clear at the top of the table – the current discomfort within the Penske camp will be forgotten. But should he lose by fewer than 10 points – and to Chip Ganassi Racing's six-time champion Scott Dixon – there will be a huge question for Penske management to answer: should McLaughlin have been asked to move aside for Power for the good of the team?

It would have been exceptionally harsh on McLaughlin, who took pole and led 104 of the 110 laps on the 1.964-mile road course just outside Oregon's largest city. He was flawless. But in truth his championship chances are negligible, Power's considerable, and over the past dozen years the Aussie veteran has missed out on race-winning opportunities trying to help a team-mate's championship quest, and has also lost titles to both cruel misfortune and his team's apparent apathy when faced with stern challenges from rival teams.

Twenty-five cars started in Portland, but the race was all about the seven drivers who entered the penultimate round with a mathematical chance of the title – Power, Josef Newgarden (-3 points), Dixon (-14), Marcus Ericsson (-17), Alex Palou (-43), McLaughlin (-54) and Pato O'Ward (-58) – plus the Rookie of the Year contenders, Christian Lundgaard of Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing and David Malukas of Dale Coyne Racing with HMD.

Since the previous round at World Wide Technology Raceway, Penske had tested

ABBOTT

Points leader Power (12) started alongside McLaughlin but got no Penske favours
DOLE

at Portland and, although Power shunted, he was quickest by a quarter-second, three tenths clear of Newgarden and three and a half tenths faster than McLaughlin. Perhaps the 2018 Portland polesitter showed his hand too soon, given that data is freely exchanged between team-mates at Penske, for Newgarden and McLaughlin appeared his match in practice.

During his attempted pole run in the Firestone Fast Six, Power adjusted his front anti-roll bar and, as he returned his right hand to the wheel, the cuff of his glove caught the gearchange upshift paddle behind the steering wheel. He saved the moment, but that slight boo-boo was enough to ensure that McLaughlin and Newgarden outqualified him.

Yet Power would still start on the front row, alongside series sophomore McLaughlin, since Newgarden's #2 Penske machine had been fitted with its fifth Chevrolet engine, ahead of time, which incurs a six-place grid penalty in IndyCar. Behind the two Antipodeans, therefore, would be Lundgaard and Palou, the 2021 Portland polesitter (and reigning series champion) who was Ganassi's sole representative in the Fast Six. Heck, he was the only Ganassi driver in the top 15, with Dixon and Ericsson having fallen in their Q1 groups, unable to convert primary tyre speed into alternate tyre pace when it mattered most, and relegated to 16th and 18th on the grid.

Fifth and sixth would be the Arrow McLaren SP Dallara-Chevys of O'Ward and Felix Rosenqvist, while Colton Herta would start alongside Newgarden and just ahead of his Andretti Autosport team-mate Alexander Rossi.

At the start — which IndyCar informed the teams would be in the acceleration zone out of the final corner, Turn 12 (see panel, p34) — McLaughlin led away without problem, Power tucking in behind, then pulling out wide as he picked up the draft and not wishing to run into the back of his team-mate. That freed Lundgaard to dive alongside Power, and carry more momentum around the outside of the Penske veteran into Turn 2 and move into second place.

Right behind them, O'Ward, the highest-placed driver to start on Firestone's harder primary tyres, belied his relative lack of grip to pull the same manoeuvre on Palou and move into fourth. The miracle was that lap one/Turn 1 had been calamity-free, but there would be more strange occurrences to come.

By the end of lap six McLaughlin had a 2.9-second lead over Lundgaard, with Power running a further second adrift, confident that his crew could jump him ahead of the RLLR car at the first round of pitstops and eager not to overwork his front tyres in Lundgaard's dirty air. He also had the reassurance of knowing that hard-tyred — slow — O'Ward was bottling up his pursuers. In fact, O'Ward's remarkable efforts were put in context by Newgarden, who had also chosen to start on primaries and had slipped down to 11th.

Dixon had moved up two places in the opening laps but the #9 team were ready to gamble, pulling him in on lap 13 to get him

"McLaughlin was flawless. But in truth his championship chances are negligible, Power's considerable"

off primaries and onto alternates. That prompted Newgarden to do likewise, while more surprising was that Palou, who had started on used reds, pitted a lap after that from fifth place to take on a set of new reds. But the outgoing champion would soon appreciate that this was not his day, reporting to his team that he had instability at the rear end, whatever tyres he ran.

To avoid the usual risk — early stoppers getting a jump on the longer runners if a caution flies — Power pitted from third at the end of lap 17 and took on a set of scuffed reds, while O'Ward pitted a lap later to get off his primaries and take on his first set of reds. McLaughlin risked it until lap 21 before pitting, while Lundgaard stopped a lap later. A slight delay on the refuelling hose and strong out-laps from Power meant the RLLR car emerged behind the Aussie.

Ericsson would run extremely long — until the end of lap 31, in fact — because the Indianapolis 500 winner had little to lose, but his tactic withered and died, since he emerged in the position he started, 18th. In stark contrast, early stopping worked out »

well for those quick enough: Newgarden was now sixth, Dixon 11th.

And Newgarden — as irrepressible a driver as has raced IndyCars in the past 15 years — was on the attack. He sliced past Palou for fifth at the super-quick Turn 10, at the end of the back straight, on lap 42, a move emulated by Graham Rahal a lap later.

Penske's ability to devise a set-up that was fast yet also kind to tyres was highlighted in this second stint. Power shaved his margin to McLaughlin from 8s to 5.5s and had stretched his advantage

"Newgarden – as irrepressible a driver as has raced IndyCars in the past 15 years – was on the attack"

over Lundgaard from 1.5 to over 6s. Indeed, the Dane was checking his mirrors for the closing O'Ward.

Newgarden pitted from fifth on lap 45, the same lap as Dixon, the pair of them taking on scrubbed reds. A lap later, Lundgaard pitted to get off his worn reds to grab a set of primaries. Two laps later, McLaughlin and Power stopped for their obligatory stint on primary tyres and they were followed in by O'Ward, whose AMSP team got him out ahead of Lundgaard.

O'Ward on reds started closing on leader McLaughlin and Power, who discovered Penske's advantage was not greater than the margin between reds and blacks, while Newgarden closed on O'Ward after passing Lundgaard on lap 55. Twelve laps later, O'Ward was within 1s of Power, and Newgarden was only 2s behind, but then Power sliced inside the lapped Ganassi car of Jimmie Johnson at Turn 1 and bought himself some breathing room since O'Ward couldn't pass Johnson until the back straight. At this point, the alternates lost their grip advantage: now O'Ward and Newgarden started losing a tenth or two from Power, who was just 4s behind McLaughlin.

McLaughlin, Power, O'Ward, Newgarden, Rahal and Herta stopped for the final time on lap 78 and remained in that order, but in condensed form. McLaughlin had lost time on his in-lap when Rosenqvist emerged ahead of him from his final stop and so, by the time the top four emerged from the pitlane, McLaughlin's margin over Power was down to 1.4s.

Power shaved that lead down to 1s, when the first caution of the day flew on lap 84, as Ed Carpenter Racing's Rinus VeeKay misjudged a lapping manoeuvre on Johnson and squeezed the NASCAR legend into the wall, sending the #48 slithering into the Turn 1 runoff and requiring a rescue mission.

The stops just before this solitary yellow had moved Rossi into fifth ahead of Dixon, Rahal and Herta, while Lundgaard stalled and fell to 10th.

On the restart, with 23 laps to go, O'Ward tried to outbrake Power into Turn 1 but, even though the cautious Penske driver ran as deep as he could, the AMSP car still smacked him with its left side, damaging its own sidepod. Power held firm and retained the running order for the restart.

In the end, there was no need for lap one/Turn 1 worries. IndyCar, having seen the support race chaos, let the polesitter, Scott McLaughlin, 'take the green' soon after he hit the acceleration zone exiting Turn 12, so the field was too stretched out to run two-abreast by the time they braked for Turn 1 on the first lap. There would be only one caution period, late in the race, and it was down to driver misjudgement rather than opening-lap overambition.

TACKLING PORTLAND'S DANGER SPOT

BAKER

The triangular-shaped chicane at the end of the pitstraight in Portland has been the scene of many a multi-car shunt over IndyCar's years racing at the track, since it requires the drivers to brake from 180mph to 60mph for right-handed Turn 1 and then very rapidly to 35mph for Turn 2's left-hander. If drivers are released at the start-finish line, they tend to still be bunched into the braking zones, creating a messy four-into-two gumbo. Confusion then reigns when drivers who have outbraked themselves into Turn 1 or see trouble brewing into Turn 2 try to use the runoff, and rejoin at the exit of Turn 3. How is Race Control supposed to re-order the cars during the subsequent caution period? Whose avoidance moves were legitimate and which drivers tried to steal an advantage by heading through the runoff?

IndyCar installed a second 'chicane within the chicane', which drivers had to negotiate should they end up in the runoff. It's estimated that this remedy took two seconds longer from T1 to T3 than using the racing surface, so it would be more apparent to Race Control how to set

POWERED BY motorsport STATS

Never forget Scott Dixon. Six-time champ was third and is still in contention

GALSTAD

Power, McLaughlin and Dixon formed IndyCar's second all-Antipodean podium

LEVITT

second. Meanwhile, Newgarden had needed to brake slightly early, having made the curious decision to run Firestone primaries on what was very clearly a 'red' day, and so Rossi had dived inside him, and the pair had been so fixated on each other through Turn 1 that they failed to notice Dixon passing the two of them through Turn 2! O'Ward had lost momentum after his failed pass on Power, Dixon was about to pass him into Turn 4 and the AMSP driver moved hard right to block him. That incurred a penalty from Race Control to relinquish the spot to the six-time champion.

Over the closing laps, McLaughlin held his lead at around 1.5s, while Power occasionally closed, but was now focused on holding off Dixon. After 110 laps, this trio had scored the second all-Antipodean podium in IndyCar history, the first being Power-Dixon-Ryan Briscoe at Texas Motor Speedway 11 years ago.

Somehow O'Ward and his flapping sidepod held off Rahal to the flag, but the Mexican ace fell out of championship contention, as did 12th-placed Palou. Newgarden's choice of primary tyres in the closing stint dropped him to ninth initially, but he moved into eighth when Lundgaard tried to outbrake Rossi for seventh at Turn 1, collected a signboard and needed to stop again for its removal.

Newgarden is now tied on 503 points with his old rival Dixon, 20 behind Power, with Ericsson and McLaughlin outsiders.

NEXT REPORT

LAGUNA SECA TITLE DECIDER
15 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

RESULTS ROUND 15/16, PORTLAND (USA), 4 SEPTEMBER (110 LAPS – 216.040 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	**Scott McLaughlin** (NZL)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	1h56m15.6892s
2	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.1792s
3	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+1.6006s
4	**Pato O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP/Dallara-Chevrolet	+13.8892s
5	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+14.8208s
6	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian/Dallara-Honda	+16.3039s
7	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+17.0044s
8	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	+17.6062s
9	**Callum Ilott** (GBR)	Juncos Hollinger Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.0978s
10	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Arrow McLaren SP/Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.6356s
11	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+23.5169s
12	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+27.5282s
13	**Kyle Kirkwood** (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	+28.3322s
14	**David Malukas** (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with HMD/Dallara-Honda	+29.0288s
15	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+31.2329s
16	**Devlin DeFrancesco** (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+32.5754s
17	**Helio Castroneves** (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing/Dallara-Honda	+33.8121s
18	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR/Dallara-Honda	+34.0886s
19	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+34.7299s
20	**Rinus van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	+35.4454s
21	**Christian Lundgaard** (DNK)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+44.5500s
22	**Dalton Kellett** (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
23	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Meyer Shank Racing/Dallara-Honda	-10 laps
24	**Jimmie Johnson** (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	82 laps-accident
25	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	67 laps-clutch line/fire

Winner's average speed 111.493mph. **Fastest lap** **Newgarden** 59.5874s, 118.656mph.

Q3 **1 McLaughlin 58.2349s**; 2 **Power** 58.4254s; 3 **Lundgaard** 58.4482s; 4 **Palou** 58.5075s; 5 **O'Ward** 58.6090s; 8 **Newgarden** 58.3129s*. * = grid penalty.
Q2 **Newgarden 57.9651s**; **Lundgaard** 58.0753s; **Power** 58.0868s; **McLaughlin** 58.2504s; **O'Ward** 58.2593s; **Palou** 58.3381s; 6 **Rosenqvist** 58.3475s; 7 **Herta** 58.3925s; 9 **Rossi** 58.3983s; 10 **Malukas** 58.4038s; 11 **Rahal** 58.4475s; 12 **van Kalmthout** 58.5356s.
Q1 – GROUP 1 **Newgarden 58.0433s**; **O'Ward** 58.1408s; **van Kalmthout** 58.2292s; **Rossi** 58.2318s; **Herta** 58.3020s; **Rahal** 58.4106s; 13 **Kirkwood** 58.4865s; 15 **Grosjean** 58.5097s; 17 **Harvey** 58.5332s; 19 **Pagenaud** 58.6898s; 21 **Castroneves** 58.7534s; 23 **Johnson** 59.1933s.
Q1 – GROUP 2 **Lundgaard 57.9218s**; **Power** 57.9266s; **McLaughlin** 58.0029s; **Malukas** 58.0506s; **Rosenqvist** 58.1465s; **Palou** 58.1497s; 14 **Ilott** 58.1988s; 16 **Dixon** 58.2628s; 18 **Ericsson** 58.3064s; 20 **Daly** 58.4398s; 22 **Sato** 58.6058s; 24 **DeFrancesco** 58.6127s; 25 **Kellett** 59.0082s.

CHAMPIONSHIP
1 Power 523; 2 **Newgarden** 503; 3 **Dixon** 503; 4 **Ericsson** 484; 5 **McLaughlin** 482; 6 **Palou** 457; 7 **O'Ward** 456; 8 **Herta** 362; 9 **Rossi** 361; 10 **Rosenqvist** 360.

Demon Drugovich in Dutch dunes

FIA FORMULA 2
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
3-4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 12/14

Drugovich in his element on fast Zandvoort swerves

PORTLOCK/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Felipe Drugovich put one hand on the FIA Formula 2 title at Zandvoort with a convincing win in the feature race on a weekend when title rival Theo Pourchaire floundered. The MP Motorsport driver's win puts him 69 points clear with two rounds remaining, and he could take the crown at Monza this weekend.

The Brazilian's victory at his team's home race came after a red flag and two safety cars. Logan Sargeant, who lined up third for Carlin, locked up at the first corner at Tarzan and went through the gravel before rejoining. He then clipped the back of Ralph Boschung on the entry to the high-speed Scheivlak, pitching him into the barriers. The safety car was initially deployed, before the red flags appeared.

Drugovich led the pack back out for a rolling restart, with the Virtuosi Racing car of Jack Doohan in pursuit. The Australian moved in and feinted a move into Tarzan, only to lock up dramatically and flat-spot his left-front Pirelli.

Despite this, Doohan clung on for a few more laps before pitting to get off the alternate tyres and onto the primes. Drugovich stopped a lap later and emerged in front, and Doohan lost further time clearing the late-stopping Tatiana Calderon. Doohan was further scuppered next time round when Richard Vershoor, whose Trident car had run fourth early on, pitted. The Dutchman emerged between the duo fighting for the net lead, and Doohan had to sweep around the outside of the Hugenholtz hairpin while Verschoor was bringing his tyres up to temperature.

Liam Lawson led Marcus Armstrong at the front, with both of them starting on the prime tyres, but their strategies were ruined when Marino Sato left the pits with the front-left wheel on his Virtuosi car not fitted properly and trundled into the wall at Gerlachbocht, causing a safety car.

Lawson left it extremely late — well onto the start/finish straight — before gunning it at the restart. It caused chaos behind, with Doohan braking to avoid Drugovich, then getting rear-ended by Verschoor, forcing the Virtuosi car out. Clement Novalak and Calderon also came to grief, and the safety car was immediately redeployed.

This time Lawson went early on the restart, and one by one the late stoppers pitted out of the way of Drugovich, who went on to defeat the tattered car of Verschoor by 2.4 seconds. Ayumu Iwasa (DAMS) beat Dennis Hauger (Prema Racing) to third, the Japanese and Verschoor getting the overcut on the early-pitting Norwegian after he'd run third in the early stages.

Armstrong beat Novalak to the finish on Saturday

PANTLING/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Best of the late stoppers was Pourchaire, whose shunt at Hugenholtz in qualifying left him 16th on the grid. He went on a charge in the late stages to place ninth. That partly made up for his sprint race on Saturday, when he speared across the gravel at Tarzan while trying to pass David Beckmann, and finished 20th and last.

Up front, Hitech GP driver Armstrong took his third sprint race win of the season. He beat reversed-grid polesitter Novalak off the line, while Hauger went around the outside of Juri Vips at Gerlachbocht to take third into the Hugenholtz hairpin. Lawson then got past Vips up the inside of Turn 12.

The safety car was deployed in the closing stages when Calderon spun into the gravel at Gerlachbocht, leaving one lap of racing to the finish. Armstrong caught MP driver Novalak unawares to break away. Behind Hauger, Lawson and Vips, Iwasa rounded Verschoor at Tarzan to grab a late sixth.

MEGAN WHITE

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 2
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Race 1 Marcus Armstrong
Hitech Grand Prix
Race 2 Felipe Drugovich
MP Motorsport

FIA FORMULA 3
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Race 1 Caio Collet
MP Motorsport
Race 2 Zane Maloney
Trident

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The Bajan flag flies high for Maloney

PANTLING/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Maloney enjoys party at the Zandvoort beach

FIA FORMULA 3
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
3-4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/9

Martins has moved back into the F3 points lead

PORTLOCK/FORMULA MOTORSPORT LIMITED

Barbados racer Zane Maloney captured his second consecutive FIA Formula 3 feature race win after a battle by the North Sea at Zandvoort, while Victor Martins retook the championship lead.

Maloney qualified his Trident car on pole, but lost the advantage into Tarzan — a common occurrence across the Dutch Grand Prix weekend — to ART Grand Prix driver Martins. Maloney attempted to brave it around the outside, bounced wide across the grass, but crucially clung on to second place.

The safety car was first deployed on lap three, with Brad Benavides rear-ending William Alatalo into Gerlachbocht behind the paddock, sending both into the gravel.

When racing resumed, Prema's third-placed Red Bull Junior Jak Crawford locked up at Tarzan, falling to ninth and allowing Franco Colapinto into the podium places for local team Van Amersfoort Racing.

Maloney retook the lead out of Tarzan on lap 12 of 26 in a neat move after forcing Martins to defend the inside line, and set about attempting to build an advantage as the Frenchman struggled more with his tyres in the second half of the race.

Racing was again neutralised on lap 18 when David Vidales parked trackside with a mechanical issue. Just as Maloney had streaked clear once more, there was yet another pause after Rafael Villagomez fell off at Tarzan while duelling with Juan Manuel Correa and became lodged in the gravel, while Gregoire Saucy retired with damage to his front-right steering arm.

Maloney led the pack as the safety car ended with two laps remaining, and managed to hold on to the end, despite Martins looking closer on the restart. Colapinto took third from title contenders Roman Stanek and Isack Hadjar (the pre-weekend points leader), with Crawford recovering to sixth ahead of Caio Collet.

Collet had taken victory for MP Motorsport in the Saturday reversed-grid sprint race, with Correa finishing second and at last taking his first series podium.

With a great start, Collet immediately moved from fourth into third as second-place starter Saucy fell back to fifth. The Brazilian Alpine Academy driver then swept past Zak O'Sullivan while Correa held the lead out of the first corners.

Collet closed in on the ART car out front, before an attempt to take the lead was thwarted when he skimmed the gravel, and O'Sullivan closed in. But he managed to make it past Correa courtesy of DRS on lap five. The two ran side by side through the first three corners before Collet made it stick at the Hugenholtz hairpin, and then set about building a four-second cushion to the finish.

Correa was second, while Carlin driver O'Sullivan finished third for his second podium of the season.

It was a tough weekend for the championship hopefuls. Hitech GP driver Hadjar was sixth in this race, while Stanek was 10th after taking to the gravel at Tarzan after the start to avoid Trident team-mate Maloney, who was spun around by Colapinto. Prema's pair of Ferrari juniors, Ollie Bearman and Arthur Leclerc, had their weekends ruined by a late red flag in qualifying for an Alatalo crash when they were on hot laps, so qualified 14th and 20th respectively. Neither scored points, although Bearman finished a charging 10th on Sunday after falling as low as 18th, before being penalised for lagging behind the safety car.

MEGAN WHITE

Legeret takes his turn on way to Audi victory

SRO/TWENTY-ONE CREATION/BENICHOU

Mies and Sainteloc survive at Hockenheim

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)
4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 4/5

There were few people in the Hockenheim paddock last weekend who would have bet against an Audi victory in the penultimate GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup round. But what did turn heads was that it was not the crack WRT squad, but the marque's 'other' team Sainteloc that came out on top with the trio of Christopher Mies, Lucas Legeret and Patric Niederhauser.

On the face of it, the race was Audi's to lose, but that doesn't paint the whole picture. The threats from Ferrari's Iron Lynx squad and the Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini ensemble were real, but luck wasn't on their side at the key moments.

WRT dominated qualifying, with Charles Weerts, Kelvin van der Linde and Dries Vanthoor each topping their segment to put their Audi on an emphatic pole from the lead Iron Lynx Ferrari of Davide Rigon, Antonio Fuoco and Alessio Rovera. Lurking in third was the confident Lambo trio of Jack Aitken, Albert Costa and Mirko Bortolotti.

Weerts led off the start and held on either side of a 30-minute full course yellow, brought out after Arthur Rougier tipped the Jota McLaren of Rob Bell into the barriers at high speed on the run from the hairpin.

Upon resumption, Weerts maintained his lead from Rovera and the Car Collection Audi of Mattia Drudi, who had jumped past Aitken on the opening tour. But Weerts soon hit trouble when a gearbox downshift problem sent him down the order. Van der Linde took over in the hope that the issue would rectify itself, but the car was stuck in fifth gear and was out of the race.

Rovera had been knocked out of contention in the stadium section by Iron Lynx team-mate James Calado. The pair had been trying to pass the GetSpeed Mercedes of Maro Engel, and Rovera took his normal line but, with Calado unsighted on the inside, contact was made.

That promoted Drudi to second, with Aitken third. But Aitken soon made an early first stop after reporting a tyre vibration. A team error meant Aitken overshot his box and, with the car having to be pushed back in order to refuel, it lost 25s. Another tyre failure with Costa at the wheel necessitated an additional stop, before Bortolotti worked his way through the traffic to finish sixth.

Audi was now back in charge, with Luca Ghiotto (in for Drudi) chased by Mies, who had crucially prevailed in a lively scrap with GetSpeed Mercedes driver Steijn Schothorst. Sainteloc perfected the undercut to grab the lead and stretched away in the final hour as the Car Collection car hit trouble. This enabled the Attempto Audi of Markus Winkelhock, Dennis Marschall and Kim-Luis Schramm to take second. Dinamic Motorsport Porsche trio Klaus Bachler, Alessio Picariello and Matteo Cairoli were third from the GetSpeed Merc, with Valentino Rossi, Nico Muller and Frederic Vervisch the lead WRT Audi crew in fifth.

The Frey Lambo team did take Silver Cup spoils in seventh overall. Konsta Lappalainen, Stuart White and newcomer Mick Wishofer punched well above their weight, and briefly fought for the overall podium.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Weerts, Rovera and Aitken in front at start, but all would hit trouble

SRO/HECQ

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Kristoffersson makes it three out of three

WORLD RALLYCROSS
RIGA (LVA)
3-4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 2/6

Kristoffersson leads in a Latvian forest
STETCU/RED BULL

Johan Kristoffersson continued the perfect start to his quest for a fifth World Rallycross title by making it three wins out of three. Following his victory in the single-event opener at Hell, he added two more in the Latvian double-header last weekend.

The Kristoffersson Motorsport Volkswagen star topped the eight-car all-electric field in the first heats of Saturday's event, only to lose out in a battle with Timmy Hansen and Niclas Gronholm in his second heat, allowing Hansen's brother Kevin to head the intermediate ranking in his Peugeot 208.

Kristoffersson then rose from third to first in his semi-final, with Kevin Hansen claiming the other — and pole for the final. Hansen took the lead of that, with Kristoffersson in hot pursuit. On the third lap Kristoffersson took his joker lap; Hansen did the same next time around, but the 'undercut' worked and the VW was in front.

Hansen's older brother Timmy won his battle for third with Ole Christian Veiby, while first-time finalist Gustav Bergstrom claimed fifth position.

Mixed conditions came into play on Sunday, with Kristoffersson tiptoeing his way through the first heats to top the pile, and Hansen Sr winning the second heats. Kristoffersson then won the opening semi-final, before the PWR of Gronholm claimed the second.

At the start of the final there was contact between Kristoffersson and Hansen Sr, allowing Kevin Hansen into the lead from fifth in the starting line-up. The older of the Swedish siblings took his joker on the opening lap, and that promoted Kristoffersson to second on the road, before he began to hunt down the younger Hansen. The Peugeot took its joker on the penultimate lap; Kristoffersson did so on the final tour and emerged to win by 0.285 seconds.

This time it was the sister KMS VW of Veiby that finished in third, from Hansen Sr and and Gronholm.

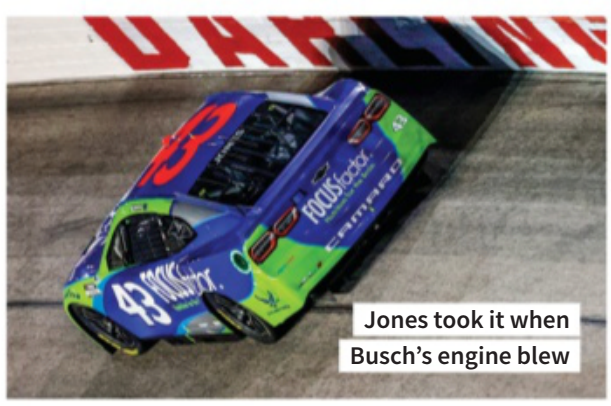
Jones upstages the playoff 16

NASCAR CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)
4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 27/36

Erik Jones pulled off a playoff stunner with a surprise victory in last Sunday night's Southern 500 at Darlington.

Jones's Petty GMS Motorsports Chevrolet had run in the top 10 for most of the race, and inherited the lead on lap 345 of 367 when Kyle Busch, who exited pitroad with the lead, suddenly saw the engine blow in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota while the race was still under caution.

Jones had come off pitroad behind Busch and led the way on the restart. He spent the final 20 laps holding off a furious challenge from the JGR Toyota of Denny Hamlin before claiming the victory by 0.252 seconds.


Jones took it when Busch's engine blew
NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

It's the first time since the advent of the playoff system in the NASCAR Cup Series that a non-playoff driver has won the opener of the 10-race playoffs.

"Honestly, that's the calmest I've been in the race car going for a win ever," Jones said of his late-race battle with Hamlin. "I think back to the last time winning here, and I was driving my guts out, my nerves were pounding, my stomach was hurting, and today it was just business as usual. I knew Denny would run me clean and knew it was going to be tough for him to pass. It was tough to pass all day, and we got a good restart there."

Tyler Reddick finished third ahead of Joey Logano and Christopher Bell.

With two races remaining in the first round of the playoffs, Austin Cindric, Chase Briscoe, Austin Dillon and Kevin Harvick are the lowest four in points and most in danger of being eliminated.

JIM UTTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)
Christopher Mies/Patric Niederhauser/Lucas Legeret
Sainteloc Junior Team (Audi R8 LMS GT3 Evo II)

WORLD RALLYCROSS
RIGA (LVA)
Races 1 & 2 Johan Kristoffersson
Kristoffersson Motorsport (VW Polo RX1e)

NASCAR CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)
Erik Jones
Petty GMS Motorsports (Chevrolet Camaro)

GT4 EUROPEAN SERIES
HOCKENHEIM (DEU)
Race 1 Lluc Ibanez/Enzo Joulie
NM Racing Team (Mercedes-AMG GT4)
Race 2 Erwan Bastard/Roee Meyuhas
Sainteloc Racing (Audi R8 LMS GT4)

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Brit Foster crowned with Portland win

INDY PRO 2000
PORTLAND (USA)
2-3 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 9/9

ROAD TO INDY/BAKER

Foster wrapped it up with victory on Friday

American-based Hampshireman Louis Foster was crowned champion of the Indy Pro 2000 series last weekend at Portland after taking seven wins and five pole positions from the season's 18 rounds.

Foster's seventh victory with Exclusive Autosport came in last Friday's first of three IP2000 races at the Oregon circuit. That nudged his points tally beyond the reach of Juncos Hollinger Racing's Reece Gold, who was second in that race and followed it up with two well-judged victories.

"I managed to get pole position and Reece challenged me quite hard going into Turn 1 but I managed to get him back in Turn 2," said Foster. "From there, it was really just preserving tyres. This track is really hard on tyres and it was quite hot today as well. I was just waiting for his tyres to drop off and, once they did, the gap opened up to three seconds.

"I can't thank the team enough for this year. They have been amazing and the series has been amazing. I have really enjoyed my first year in the States."

The result has earned Foster a $614,425 scholarship, providing he remains on the Road to Indy ladder, and he is set to graduate to Indy Lights for 2023.

Florida teenager Gold earned four wins and five poles in 2022 and that was easily enough to ensure him a runner-up finish ahead of his team-mate, Pakistani-Briton Enaam Ahmed, who took a third and two fourths in Portland's three races to ensure he finished ahead of DEForce Racing's Nolan Siegel and claim third in the championship.

Benjamin Pedersen won the single Indy Lights race from Matthew Brabham and Linus Lundqvist, prior to this weekend's double-header finale at Laguna Seca. Swede Lundqvist is all but certain to wrap that crown up in the first race.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Klein escapes from the chaos

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 7/8

Reigning French Carrera Cup champion Marvin Klein scored his maiden Supercup success by leading all the way in a dramatic race at Zandvoort.

Series leader Dylan Pereira was fastest in qualifying, but he was also involved in a collision, for which he was given a three-place grid penalty. That elevated Klein to pole, with 2020 Carrera Cup GB champion Harry King alongside.

King's race didn't last long. A collision with local hero Jaap van Lagen on the second lap forced both out of the race, and ended King's hopes of remaining in contention for the title going into the final round at Monza this weekend.

Pereira had dropped to eighth on the opening lap, but passed Laurin Heinrich next time round, and the King/van Lagen clash meant he was fifth during the ensuing safety car. He then got past Bastian Buus for fourth during the brief period of racing before another caution.

Once racing resumed, Pereira passed title rival Larry ten Voorde, and he moved up to second when Morris Schuring was penalised for an out-of-position start, with ten Voorde – who is now 18 points behind Pereira – promoted to third.

The race was finally red-flagged due to a heavy shunt for Aaron Mason.

PORSCHE

Klein leads through a sea of orange-clad Larry ten Voorde fans

WEEKEND WINNERS

INDY PRO 2000
PORTLAND (USA)
Race 1 Louis Foster
Exclusive Autosport
Races 2 & 3 Reece Gold
Juncos Hollinger Racing

INDY LIGHTS
PORTLAND (USA)
Benjamin Pedersen
Global Racing Group with HMD Motorsports

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
ZANDVOORT (NLD)
Marvin Klein
CLRT

EUROFORMULA OPEN
IMOLA (ITA)
Race 1 Oliver Goethe
Motopark (Dallara-Spiess)
Race 2 Vlad Lomko
CryptoTower Racing
(Dallara-Spiess)
Race 3 Josh Mason
CryptoTower Racing
(Dallara-Spiess)

V8 STOCK CARS
VELO CITTA (BRA)
Race 1 Felipe Lapenna
Hot Car (Chevrolet Cruze)
Race 2 Ricardo Mauricio
Eurofarma RC (Chevrolet Cruze)

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Bagnaia pips Bastianini at home

MOTOGP
MISANO (ITA)
4 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 14/20

The limitations of the Yamaha are becoming all too apparent in the 2022 MotoGP championship battle. All season, reigning champion Fabio Quartararo has been outperforming a bike that has lacked power.

Up to Misano last weekend, those performances were keeping his title defence solid. But the San Marino Grand Prix, an event Quartararo was expected to go well at based on past form, was a perfect display of the diminishing returns of his limit.

Quartararo qualified down in eighth in iffy conditions, meaning he could not capitalise on a three-place grid penalty for Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia for blocking another rider in FP1. Bagnaia put his machine second in the times, which meant a starting slot of fifth after his punishment was applied.

Bagnaia's march to the front began by jumping up to third at Turn 1 and making light work of the Gresini Ducati of future factory team-mate Enea Bastianini at Turn 8 on lap three. This was a move for the lead after poleman and team-mate Jack Miller had crashed out the previous tour.

Bastianini's form was shaky in the early stages, and a brief battle with VR46 Ducati rider Luca Marini at just past mid-distance offered Bagnaia some breathing space.

Quartararo had made up no spots on the opening lap and only found himself in sixth because of the crashes from Miller and fourth-placed VR46 Ducati rider Marco Bezzecchi. A mistake from Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro into Turn 13 on lap six of 27 gave Quartararo a run to take fifth.

Vinales was a strong third for Aprilia

Although he was able to break away from Espargaro, Quartararo could do nothing to reel in the podium scrap.

Bagnaia's hopes of a fourth successive win were put under immense pressure when Bastianini repelled Marini's advances on lap 16. Bastianini then eased past Maverick Vinales on the Aprilia for second place at the start of lap 20.

This allowed Bagnaia's gap to open up to around 0.6 seconds, but that was short-lived with Bastianini's pace so strong. While grip levels at the start of the race were lower than expected, the Misano circuit rubbered up as the race went on to the point where tyre wear proved to be minimal. So much so that Bastianini set the fastest lap of the race on the final tour with a time that was quicker than that which secured Miller pole, albeit in completely different conditions.

Bastianini even set that lap after making a mistake into Turn 4, which nearly proved disastrous for Ducati. The Gresini rider got out of shape under braking and almost clattered into the back of Bagnaia. While Ducati management insists that team orders will never come into play in a battle for victory, a collision in this instance would almost certainly have changed the rules of engagement — and set both on a frosty start in 2023 to their time as factory team-mates.

As it happened, both lived to ride on, but the space this offered Bagnaia would ultimately prove crucial. Bastianini stopped short of making a lunge at the last corner, admitting that doing so given the circumstances of the battle would be "crazy", but got such a run on the exit that he

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Bagnaia is on a title charge…

…while Quartararo is struggling on Yamaha

almost snatched victory away from Bagnaia.

The gap was 0.034s at the chequered flag, Bagnaia celebrating his sixth win of the campaign, and a crucial one at that. Though he is reticent to call himself a title challenger, from 91 points adrift in June after the German GP to just 30 behind Quartararo with six races still to run is changing the complexion of this championship battle.

Quartararo is aware of this. Fifth behind Marini and Vinales, Quartararo says he is operating at the limit of the bike. But he concedes this is "not enough" to defend his title. Sixth-placed Aleix Espargaro still believes in his chances, despite slipping 33 points adrift to third in the rankings after a brace of races he fully expected would be difficult for the Aprilia.

Whatever happens, Andrea Dovizioso will be sure to enjoy it from his sofa as he brings a fine career in grand prix racing to an end. A 12th place was a subdued end to his time in MotoGP, in which he won 15 races and finished as series runner-up three times.

His struggles on the Yamaha highlight how good a job Quartararo is doing in 2022. But, as is becoming far too frequent in the second half of the season, that will only get him so far — not least with the form Bagnaia is in.

LEWIS DUNCAN

NEXT REPORT

MOTORLAND ARAGON
22 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

RESULTS ROUND 14/20, MISANO (ITA), 4 SEPTEMBER (27 LAPS – 70.900 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Francesco Bagnaia** (ITA)	Ducati	41m43.199s
2	**Enea Bastianini** (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+0.034s
3	**Maverick Vinales** (ESP)	Aprilia	+4.212s
4	**Luca Marini** (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+5.283s
5	**Fabio Quartararo** (FRA)	Yamaha	+5.771s
6	**Aleix Espargaro** (ESP)	Aprilia	+10.230s
7	**Alex Rins** (ESP)	Suzuki	+12.496s
8	**Brad Binder** (ZAF)	KTM	+14.661s
9	**Jorge Martin** (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	+17.732s
10	**Alex Marquez** (ESP)	LCR Honda	+21.986s
11	**Miguel Oliveira** (PRT)	KTM	+23.685s
12	**Andrea Dovizioso** (ITA)	RNF Yamaha	+29.276s
13	**Raul Fernandez** (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+30.433s
14	**Stefan Bradl** (DEU)	Honda	+31.768s
15	**Takaaki Nakagami** (JPN)	LCR Honda	+32.547s
16	**Darryn Binder** (ZAF)	RNF Yamaha	+41.857s
17	**Marco Bezzecchi** (ITA)	VR46 Ducati	+50.559s
18	**Jack Miller** (AUS)	Ducati	+53.371s
19	**Remy Gardner** (AUS)	Tech3 KTM	+56.613s
20	**Fabio Di Giannantonio** (ITA)	Gresini Ducati	+57.304s
21	**Kazuki Watanabe** (JPN)	Suzuki	-1 lap
R	**Franco Morbidelli** (ITA)	Yamaha	2 laps-accident damage
R	**Johann Zarco** (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	0 laps-accident
R	**Michele Pirro** (ITA)	Ducati	0 laps-accident
R	**Pol Espargaro** (ESP)	Honda	0 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 101.965mph. **Fastest lap** **Bastianini** 1m31.868s, 102.900mph.

QUALIFYING 2 **1 Miller 1m31.899s**; 2 **Bastianini** 1m32.014s; 3 **Bezzecchi** 1m32.048s; 4 **Vinales** 1m32.118s; 5 **Bagnaia** 1m31.914s*; 6 **Zarco** 1m32.169s; 7 **Marini** 1m32.226s; 8 **Quartararo** 1m32.246s; 9 **A Espargaro** 1m32.577s; 10 **Oliveira** 1m32.775s; 11 **Morbidelli** 1m33.351s; 12 **Rins** 1m33.438s. *grid penalty.

QUALIFYING 1 **Bezzecchi** 1m31.961s; **Marini** 1m32.004s; 13 **Martin** 1m32.015s; 14 **Di Giannantonio** 1m32.276s; 15 **B Binder** 1m32.600s; 16 **Marquez** 1m32.631s; 17 **Pirro** 1m32.658s; 18 **Dovizioso** 1m32.663s; 19 **P Espargaro** 1m32.826s; 20 **Bradl** 1m32.838s; 21 **D Binder** 1m33.331s; 22 **Nakagami** 1m33.484s; 23 **Watanabe** 1m36.289s; 24 **Gardner** 1m44.690s; 25 **Fernandez** 1m46.732s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Quartararo 211**; 2 **Bagnaia** 181; 3 **A Espargaro** 178; 4 **Bastianini** 138; 5 **Zarco** 125; 6 **Miller** 123; 7 **B Binder** 115; 8 **Vinales** 101; 9 **Rins** 101; 10 **Martin** 94; 11 **Oliveira** 90; 12 **Marini** 82; 13 **Joan Mir** 77; 14 **Bezzecchi** 68; 15 **Marc Marquez** 60; 16 **Nakagami** 46; 17 **P Espargaro** 42; 18 **A Marquez** 35; 19 **Morbidelli** 26; 20 **Di Giannantonio** 23; 21 **Dovizioso** 15; 22 **D Binder** 10; 23 **Gardner** 9; 24 **Fernandez** 8; 25 **Bradl** 2; 26 **Pirro** 0; 27 **Lorenzo Savadori** 0; 28 **Watanabe** 0.

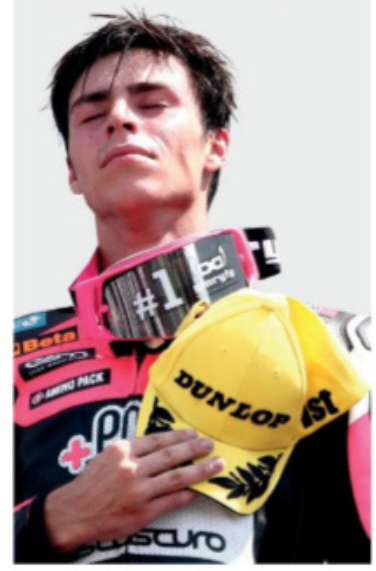
MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ducati 321**; 2 **Yamaha** 211; 3 **Aprilia** 201; 4 **KTM** 148; 5 **Suzuki** 127; 6 **Honda** 96.

Dovizioso bade farewell to MotoGP at Misano

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
MISANO (ITA)
Alonso Lopez (below)
Speed Up Racing
(Boscoscuro SF20T)

MOTO 3
MISANO (ITA)
Dennis Foggia
Leopard Racing
(Honda NSF250RW)



SEASON REVIEW

MORE GOLD FOR THE SILVER ARROWS

After Nyck de Vries was crowned Formula E champion in 2021, his Mercedes team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne stepped forward this season in a campaign of remarkable consistency

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

STALEY

The last time Vandoorne could celebrate like this was for 2015 GP2 crown

The light that burns twice as bright burns half as long, and Mercedes has burned so very brightly during its three-year tenure in Formula E. It won both of last year's crowns, then made the decision to bow out after one more season, and was hoping to leave the series on the back of a successful title defence.

It duly did so. The German manufacturer and new champion Stoffel Vandoorne faced incredibly stiff competition through the year amid a thrilling four-way battle for the title. But the 30-year-old's irrepressible consistency and diligence behind the wheel proved to be the deciding factors, handing him a first championship crown since his 2015 GP2 Series triumph.

Mercedes' title victories from last season came in an entropic season that ensured 18 drivers went into the Berlin double-header finale in mathematical contention for a title; Nyck de Vries claimed the spoils by seven points, Mercedes beat Jaguar to the teams' crown by just four points. So 2021-22 required a very different approach, and Formula E introduced a more meritocratic qualifying system that blended two group qualifying sessions with a tournament knockout system. In the written word, it appeared a convoluted system. In action, it drew admiring glances from other championships, even in Formula 1...

The idea was to create a little bit more of a pecking order and eliminate the massive advantage that the drivers in the last of four qualifying groups (populated by those at the bottom of the championship) would receive. It created much more of a cohesive championship narrative; it was still open to the flights of fancy that Formula E races often dispense, but this time it would reward consistency.

And if there was a driver who you'd bet on to deliver a near omnipresence in the points, it would be Vandoorne. A calm and considered presence behind the wheel, the Belgian's past results have indicated that, given the car, he could methodically and reliably bank points on the march to a possible title. That pre-dates Formula E; from the summer of 2014 to the end of 2015, Vandoorne finished outside the top nine places just once in 35 GP2 races. In a series that, like Formula E, values a higher variance in results, that's phenomenally consistent.

The pattern of Vandoorne's Formula E title victory is not dissimilar but, in comparison, lacks the profusion of victories he had gathered racing for ART back in 2015. In a more competitive field, Vandoorne was aware that the eventual four-way championship battle could result in drivers taking points off each other, alongside the usual chaos present in the series. If he wasn't going to win races outright, he was going to be the steadiest performer on the grid instead.

"After last year where I had that down moment in London that took me out of the championship, this year I turned up and I didn't want to leave anything on the table. Nothing," Vandoorne reflected after securing his title in South Korea. "That's what I did all season, gave it my all, controlled it when I had to control. I only had one victory but the consistency we showed this year, I think it's been impressive. And it's partly helped by the qualifying system, and I think it made the most consistent drivers and the top guys excel, and it took away a little bit of the randomness."

Vandoorne finished outside the top eight once, in Mexico City where he was tagged by Lucas di Grassi in the Foro Sol stadium on the penultimate lap. Had that not occurred, particularly amid the context of other cars dropping off with low energy when Porsche took the race to another lap, his season could well have yielded points from every race.

But often, a champion's season lives and dies with its nadir. Edoardo Mortara, one of the Fantastic Four alongside Vandoorne, Mitch Evans and Jean-Eric Vergne to contend for the title, pointed out that, since his peaks and troughs were considerably more »

Champion scored just one win, but being Monaco made it extra special for Vandoorne

GALLOWAY

"THIS YEAR I TURNED UP AND I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE ANYTHING ON THE TABLE. NOTHING"

ROUND BY ROUND

Diriyah 1
1 de Vries
2 Vandoorne
3 Dennis
Attack-mode activation error from Vandoorne grants de Vries a perfect start to his title defence, as the Dutchman grabs the lead and never looks back. Dennis takes a fine third for Andretti on its first event after BMW's exit, dispatching Lotterer when the Porsche overconsumes energy and drops back.

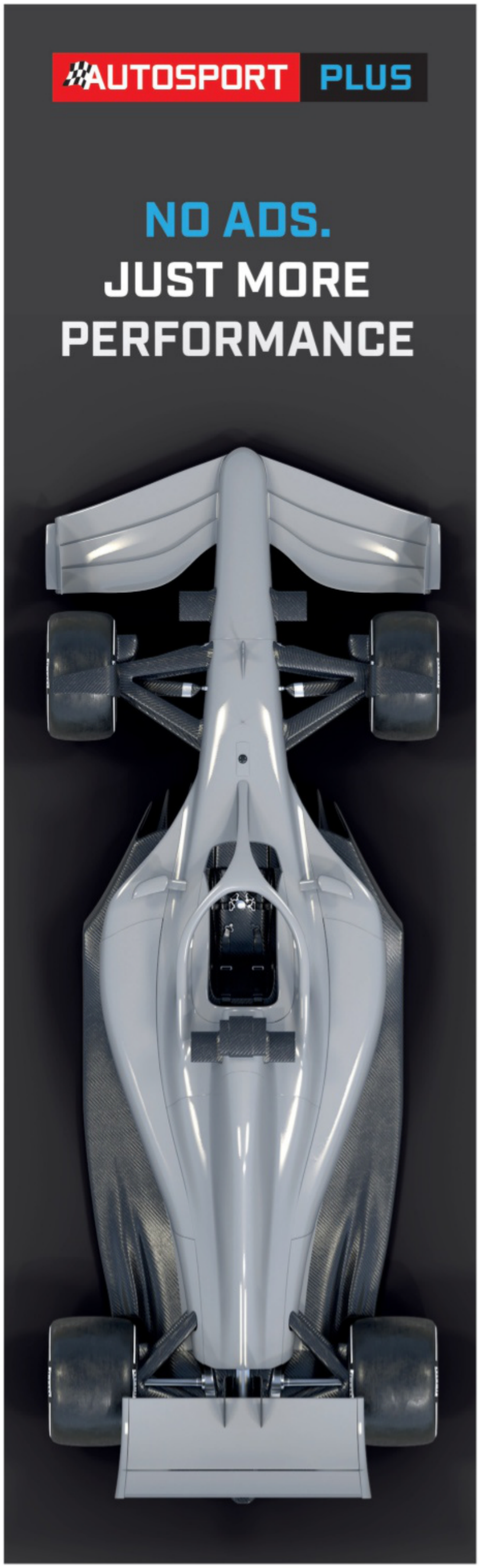
Diriyah 2
1 Mortara
2 Frijns
3 di Grassi
Mortara cements his own championship credentials with Venturi's first win of the year, charging to the front with his second attack mode as polesitter de Vries falters in the second half. Frijns snatches second from di Grassi two laps before a safety car neutralises the end of the race.

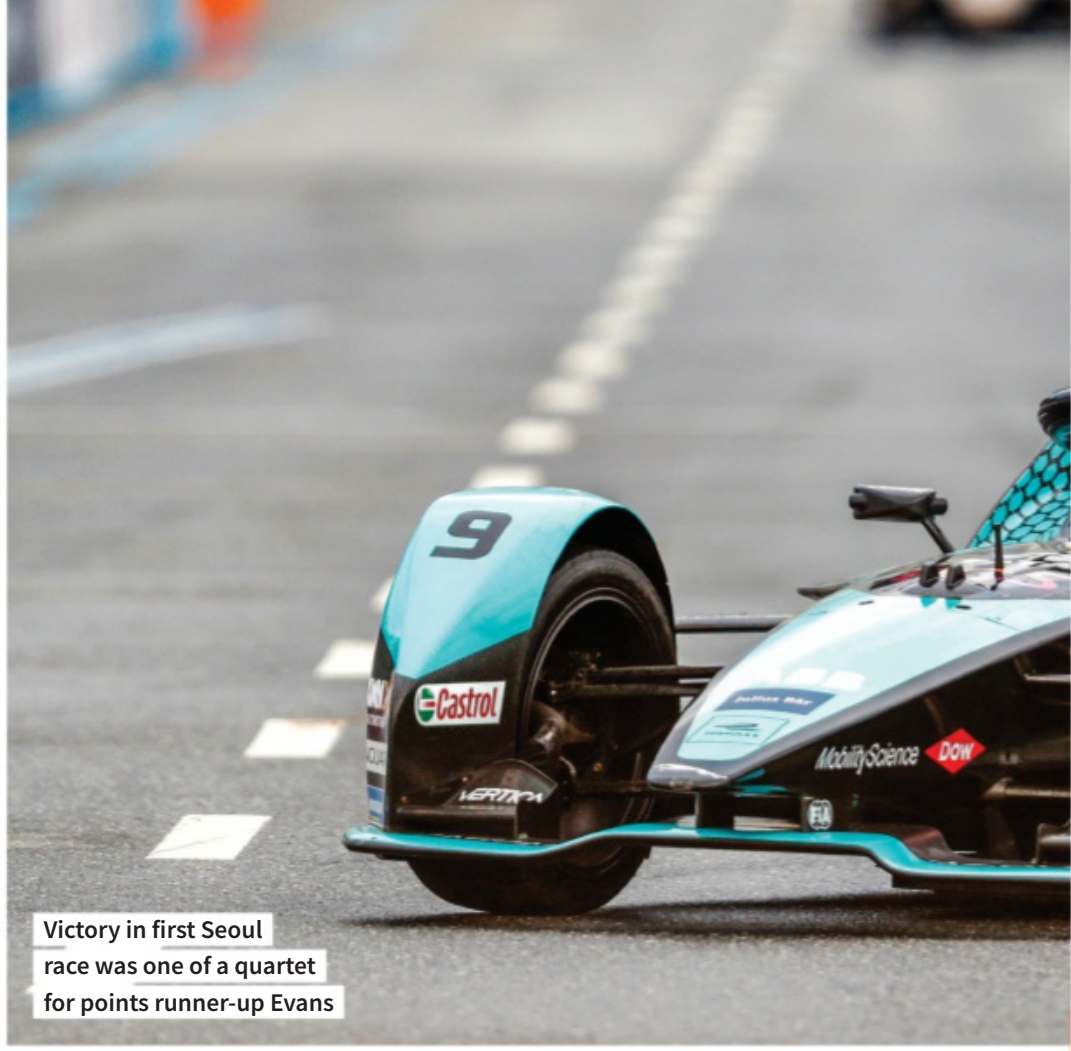
Mexico City
1 Wehrlein
2 Lotterer
3 Vergne
Porsche runs rampant in Formula E's return to Mexico City, and Wehrlein takes the race to an extra lap to leave the rest of the field struggling for energy. Lotterer plays the team game and settles for second, while Vergne's late dash for third is helped by Frijns's energy-enforced drop.

Rome 1
1 Evans
2 Frijns
3 Vandoorne
Evans rockets from ninth on the grid, scything through the order to claim a stunning victory as Jaguar atones for a miserable trio of opening races. Frijns, Vandoorne and Vergne trade places in the battle for second, with the Envision driver beating Vandoorne to the punch.

Rome 2
1 Evans
2 Vergne
3 Frijns
A risky attack-mode strategy pays off for Evans, who doubles up on Rome wins as team-mate Bird helps keep the pack at bay. Vergne challenges for victory, but has no answer for Evans at the end. Frijns benefits from Formula E's new added-time rule to peel third from Lotterer's grasp.

Monaco
1 Vandoorne
2 Evans
3 Vergne
Wehrlein's electrical issue denies him a second win of the season, as Vandoorne's mid-race pass on Evans proves enough to grant the Mercedes driver his sole victory of the year. Evans overcomes energy worries to beat Vergne to second place after the Frenchman's attack mode elapses under the safety car.





Victory in first Seoul race was one of a quartet for points runner-up Evans

"TO BE CHAMPION YOU HAVE TO BE MORE CONSISTENT. I NEED TO HAVE BETTER BAD RACE WEEKENDS!"

pronounced than the title winner's, he eventually struggled to keep up. "We knew this year if you wanted to be champion, you have to be more consistent," Mortara explains. "This is what Stoffel did – he was extremely good in that. He might have won fewer races, but in the end he was more consistent. This is what I will try to do next year; I need to have better bad race weekends!"

Although Mortara is right, Vandoorne often made his own luck when he was having a sub-optimal day. Take the first Berlin race; Vandoorne started from eighth, got a bad start and dropped to 12th. Doing that in Formula E puts a driver at risk of losing further places if they fail to be proactive and make the most of attack mode, without being reckless. That line is where Vandoorne has typically thrived, and he methodically rose through the field to rescue an excellent third place. This had followed his Monaco victory but, given the plethora of podium finishes he'd scored through the

ROUND BY ROUND

Berlin 1
1 Mortara
2 Vergne
3 Vandoorne
Mortara converts a long-overdue first Formula E pole into victory, seeing off a late threat from Vergne. The DS Techeetah driver tries a move at Turn 6 with three laps left but goes deep, giving Mortara the whip hand. Vandoorne drops to 12th on lap one, but still finishes third.

Berlin 2
1 de Vries
2 Mortara
3 Vandoorne
You wait for one, and two come at once. Mortara doubles up on Berlin poles, but is usurped by de Vries into the first corner. The reigning champ is imperious and rarely threatened, capturing a second win of the year. Vandoorne completes an all-Mercedes podium on home turf.

Jakarta
1 Evans
2 Vergne
3 Mortara
DS Techeetah has a clear advantage in qualifying, but Evans defies the weekend's formbook to overcome Vergne. In a hot and humid encounter, Vergne's battery management modes strip him of race-winning pace, amid a tightly contested battle with Evans and Mortara for victory.

BINGHAM

BAGNALL

Higher highs but much lower lows put paid to Mortara's title tilt

year, Vandoorne could have theoretically finished second and still won the title. That's championship form.

"I'm a little bit surprised myself [by the consistency] to be honest," he adds. "Even in Mexico, we would have scored points if it wasn't for some contact on the penultimate lap. That would have made it maybe an even more beautiful story. Nonetheless, it's been an incredible year. Our time came in Monaco, I'm super-proud to have ticked that one off. Monaco is one of those special races that »

Marrakech
1 Mortara
2 da Costa
3 Evans
Morocco is a late addition to the calendar after Vancouver is canned, and Mortara chalks up win number three to take the championship lead. A late charge for the win from polesitter da Costa is in vain, while Evans once again nips past Vergne at the death for a last-gasp podium.

New York City 1
1 Cassidy
2 di Grassi
3 Frijns
A sudden heavy downpour in Brooklyn puts Cassidy, di Grassi and Vandoorne in the Turn 6 wall, and so the race is red-flagged and never restarted. Cassidy is deservedly granted his first win after taking pole, with di Grassi classified second and Frijns making it both Envision Audis on the podium.

New York City 2
1 da Costa
2 Vandoorne
3 Evans
Cassidy takes pole but starts last after a penalty for a battery change. Da Costa assumes first on the grid, and keeps Vandoorne at bay for victory as the Belgian reclaims the title lead. Evans beats Sims to fourth, and Vergne and di Grassi create a brief pile-up at Turn 6.

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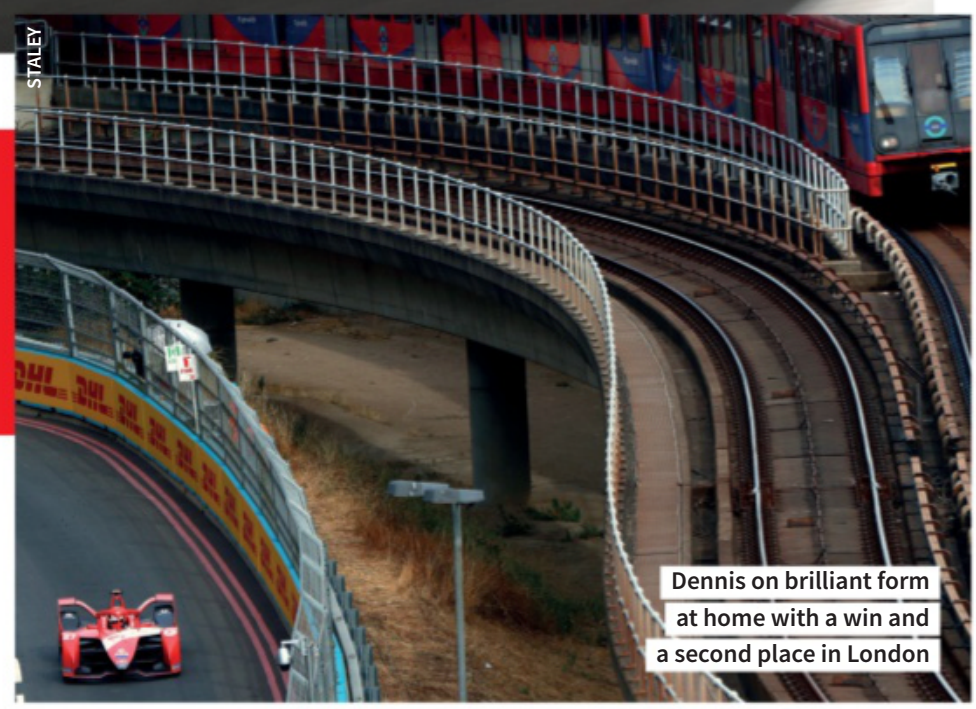
BAGNALL

Third title looked on the cards for Vergne until early consistency tailed off

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	TEAM	PTS
1	Mercedes	**319**
2	Venturi	**295**
3	DS Techeetah	**266**
4	Jaguar	**231**
5	Envision	**194**
6	Andretti	**150**
7	Porsche	**134**
8	Mahindra	**46**
9	Nissan e.dams	**36**
10	NIO 333	**7**
11	Dragon/Penske	**2**

"ON THE MORE DIFFICULT DAYS, WHERE I MANAGED TO RECOVER, THOSE WERE THE KEY MOMENTS"



STALEY

Dennis on brilliant form at home with a win and a second place in London

everyone just wants to win, everyone wants to have it on their CV.

"But even on the days where it was more difficult, that's where I managed to recover, and I think those were the key moments. I think if there's one race where that jumps in my mind there's Berlin race one. I dropped back to, like, P12 on lap one, and a few laps from the end I was still fighting for the victory. Those moments, they made the championship."

It also helped that Mercedes' Silver Arrow 02 machinery was the class of the field. In the efficiency stakes, it just seemed to boast that little bit extra, helping Vandoorne to rescue results if qualifying had not gone to plan by giving him a tad more energy to use. Crucially, the car also seemed to work well at each venue. Where Evans's challenge fell was on Jaguar having holes in its performance on a few of the circuits, such as Mexico City and Berlin, ultimately depriving him of the Vandoornian consistency that culminated in Mercedes sweeping to a second pair of crowns.

So Mercedes left Formula E on the high it craved. The core of the squad remains, because McLaren has bought out the team to compete in the new Gen3 era, while team principal Ian James was pleased that his squad added to the Silver Arrows' rich motorsport history – and deservedly so. Vandoorne, meanwhile, has a title to defend and, based on the season just gone, it would be foolish to count him out.

ROUND BY ROUND

London 1
1 Dennis
2 Vandoorne
3 Cassidy
Dennis enthrals the home crowd with a lights-to-flag victory on London's docklands, while Vandoorne's risk-free run to second extends his points advantage. De Vries has to fend off Sette Camara and Cassidy for the final podium position, but overdoes his defence and the Kiwi assumes third.

London 2
1 di Grassi
2 Dennis
3 de Vries
Although Dennis doubles up on poles at the ExCeL, fellow front-row starter di Grassi is too rapid and claims his first win for Venturi. Bird breaks his hand on lap one and is out for Seoul, and Evans's retirement from fourth helps Vandoorne take a big step towards the title.

Seoul 1
1 Evans
2 Rowland
3 di Grassi
Rowland dazzles in a wet qualifying, and a damp track produces a first-lap midfield pile-up at Turn 21. Evans picks up the lead after the first two corners, winning to give himself a fighting chance. Rowland and di Grassi complete the podium after Sims's crash brings out a late safety car.

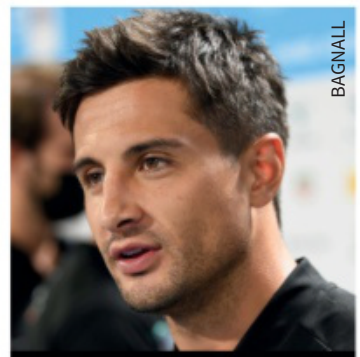
Seoul 2
1 Mortara
2 Vandoorne
3 Dennis
Mortara snatches the lead from polesitter da Costa on lap two to pick up the lead, ending a spell of poor form with victory. Vandoorne assumes second after Dennis is handed a five-second penalty for nerfing da Costa off-track, and wins the title as Mercedes bows out of Formula E.

FERRARO

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS

STOFFEL VANDOORNE

1 That he only needed to win one race to take the title underlined his ubiquity among the top 10. A paragon of consistency, Vandoorne recognised how to minimise the damage on the lesser weekends to metronomically add to his growing points tally – no mean feat in Formula E.



MITCH EVANS

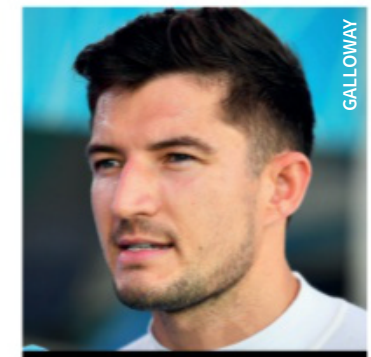
2 On the weekends where Jaguar had strong pace, he could be devastating, as evinced by his domination in Rome. His four wins proved the most of anyone in 2022, but his weaker weekends cost him relative to new champion Vandoorne, particularly in the opening three races of Diriyah and Mexico.

EDOARDO MORTARA

3 When leading from the front, Mortara was a master of managing a race, and would usually work his way there if qualifying was strong. When it wasn't, the Swiss was often worse off in the close-quarters battles through the field. Mystifying lack of London pace killed his title ambitions.

JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

4 The form man at the start of the year, early consistency made Vergne a very real contender for a third Formula E title. Later mix-ups with team arguably cost him a chance of a victory, and miserable New York and London rounds whittled away at the Frenchman's hopes.



JAKE DENNIS

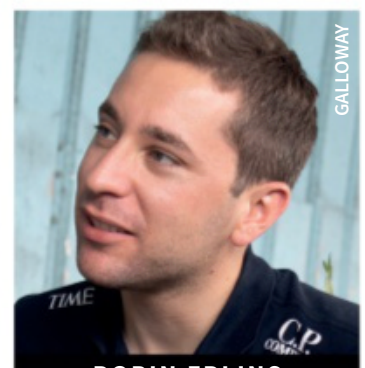
5 BMW's departure meant no manufacturer underpinning his and Andretti's efforts, but was still able to pick up his form from last year. His regular points mitigated the team's mid-season struggles, and excellent form in London and Seoul closed the year on a high.

ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

6 Struggled for race pace relative to qualifying form. Statistically the best qualifier with the highest average grid position of the year, he seemed allergic to the podium until Marrakech. Victory in New York showed him at his imperious best, but early season struggles counted him out.

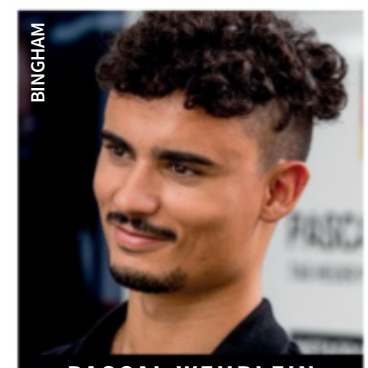
LUCAS DI GRASSI

7 Had to get to grips with his Venturi move for 2022, but a podium from the opening weekend was a strong return. On top of the car by the end of the year, di Grassi denied Dennis a double London win and helped the Monegasque squad have a very real shot at the teams' title.



ROBIN FRIJNS

8 A consistent podium finisher in the opening flurry of rounds, Frijns's season hit a speedbump at Berlin as he struggled with changes to the braking system. Results picked up by the end, but abject races in Jakarta and Marrakech ended his hopes of creating a five-way title battle.



PASCAL WEHRLEIN

9 Wehrlein led Porsche's rout in Mexico to claim his first Formula E victory, but that was as good as it got. A potential Monaco win was denied by a faulty DCDC converter, but was too often in the lower reaches of the points despite promising pace throughout the year.

NICK CASSIDY

10 A coin-flip with Nyck de Vries. Cassidy struggled initially with a new engineering team, and further points finishes were denied by contact and penalties. Could have won both NYC races without a penalty for a battery change, finding strong form at the season's end.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	PTS
1	**Stoffel Vandoorne** (BEL)	Mercedes-EQ Formula E Team	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	2	7	11	3	5	**1**	3	3	5	8	4	2	2	4	5	2	**213**
2	**Mitch Evans** (NZL)	Jaguar TCS Racing	Jaguar I-TYPE 5	10	21	19	**1**	**1**	2	5	10	**1**	3	11	3	5	R	**1**	7	**180**
3	**Edoardo Mortara** (CHE)	ROKiT Venturi Racing	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	6	**1**	5	7	R	R	**1**	2	3	**1**	9	10	18	13	R	**1**	**169**
4	**Jean-Eric Vergne** (FRA)	DS Techeetah	DS E-Tense FE21	8	6	3	4	2	3	2	9	2	4	18	R	14	R	6	6	**144**
5	**Lucas di Grassi** (BRA)	ROKiT Venturi Racing	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	5	3	12	11	8	6	R	4	7	5	2	R	9	**1**	3	11	**126**
6	**Jake Dennis** (GBR)	Avalanche Andretti Formula E	BMW iFE.21	3	5	10	13	R	9	13	13	6	7	10	8	**1**	2	4	3	**126**
7	**Robin Frijns** (NLD)	Envision Racing	Audi e-tron FE07	16	2	7	2	3	4	12	5	17	18	3	6	16	7	8	4	**126**
8	**Antonio Felix da Costa** (PRT)	DS Techeetah	DS E-Tense FE21	R	12	4	6	13	5	8	6	4	2	R	**1**	7	5	9	10	**122**
9	**Nyck de Vries** (NLD)	Mercedes-EQ Formula E Team	Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	**1**	10	6	R	14	10	10	**1**	R	6	8	7	6	3	R	R	**106**
10	**Pascal Wehrlein** (DEU)	TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team	Porsche 99X Electric	11	9	**1**	8	6	R	6	12	8	12	6	11	10	10	7	R	**71**

11 **Nick Cassidy** (Envision Racing Audi e-tron FE07) 68; 12 **Andre Lotterer** (TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team Porsche 99X Electric) 63; 13 **Sam Bird** (Jaguar TCS Racing Jaguar I-Type 5) 51; 14 **Oliver Rowland** (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M7Electro) 32; 15 **Sebastien Buemi** (Nissan e.dams Nissan IM03) 30; 16 **Oliver Askew** (Avalanche Andretti Formula E BMW iFE.21) 24; 17 **Alexander Sims** (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M7Electro) 14; 18 **Oliver Turvey** (NIO 333 FE Team NIO 333 001) 6; 19 **Maximilian Gunther** (Nissan e.dams Nissan IM03) 6; 20 **Sergio Sette Camara** (Dragon/Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 2; 21 **Dan Ticktum** (NIO 333 FE Team NIO 333 001) 1; 22 **Norman Nato** (Jaguar TCS Racing Jaguar I-TYPE 5) 0; 23 **Antonio Giovinazzi** (Dragon/Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 0; 24 **Sacha Fenestraz** (Dragon/Penske Autosport Penske EV-5) 0.

MIKEL AZCONA

READY TO BASQUE IN WORLD TITLE SUCCESS

Mikel Azcona has taken the World Touring Car Cup by storm on his switch to Hyundai for 2022, and is likely to be crowned as champion. Time to get to know the man from northern Spain

DAMIEN SMITH

Mikel Azcona has come a long way from the contrite rookie who ruined Esteban Guerreri's title shot in a frenetic World Touring Car Cup finale back in 2019. The Spaniard, then 23, could only offer a grovelling apology in the post-race press conference after nerfing the Honda ace off in a thrilling night-race climax at Sepang, clogging the Civic's radiator full of grass. He was clearly mortified to have interfered in a title showdown that fell in favour of Hyundai's Norbert Michelisz, thanks in part to Azcona's blunder. "There is always revenge," was Guerrieri's sinister response.

Three years later, Azcona is on the cusp of becoming a world champion himself for Hyundai, and such is the health of his points lead with two weekends and four races to go that it's hard to imagine karma pitching up to kick him where it hurts. From the moment he stepped into his Elantra N TCR this year, having swapped from Cupra to replace no less a figure than retiring tin-top legend Gabriele Tarquini, Azcona has been brilliant. Three race wins and six further podiums, ironing out the usual peaks and troughs of ballasted Balance of Performance, have left him 35 points clear of nearest challenger Nestor Girolami, Munnich Motorsport's 'other' Argentinian and team-mate to a still crownless Guerrieri.

Azcona is taking nothing for granted, of course. He's learned enough since 2019 not to make that kind of rookie error. Still, he readily admits that his first season as a factory Hyundai driver has been "better than expected".

"Normally when you make this kind of change — the brand, car, team, everything — you need time to adapt," says the racer from Arrigorriaga, in the Basque region of northern Spain. "But from the second day of the first three-day test at Aragon I felt very good with the car and team." He reports too that Michelisz, now very much playing second fiddle to his unintentional 2019 'kingmaker', has "helped from the very beginning".

"It is very impressive what we are doing at the moment," Azcona concedes. "In every race weekend we have scored podiums, and in Aragon and Vallelunga we took two podiums each weekend, which is amazing. I'm very impressed by that. But then I have a very good team and car, and a very good atmosphere — amazing tools to be in the top position."

Azcona admits it was an "easy decision" to join Hyundai, even though he was "very comfortable" at Cupra. Twice a champion »

"IT IS VERY IMPRESSIVE WHAT WE ARE DOING. IN EVERY RACE WEEKEND WE'VE SCORED PODIUMS"

Azcona has a healthy points lead but is taking nothing for granted

VINCENT / DPPI

Xxx
xxx
xxx

MIKEL AZCONA

Spaniard immediately felt at home in his new team, Hyundai offering "amazing tools"

GUILLAUMOT / DPPI

in TCR Europe, he'd grown up with the Spanish marque. "But at the end of last season when I received a call from [now departed Hyundai sports boss] Mr Adamo, and he said they were very interested in me... I was very happy."

Success has justified the move, which also reflects well on Tarquini, who has stepped from the cockpit into the BRC team manager's perch on the pitwall. "Mikel is having a fantastic season," gushes the inaugural 2018 WTCR king and 2009 World Touring Car champion. "From the first round he has made no mistakes in the races. He is always very focused on scoring points, and he doesn't need a lot of support with his driving. I have tried to help him around the performance, but on track he doesn't need any help."

But Azcona is quick to give credit to Tarquini's direct influence. "I've known Gabriele for a long time, in a way. Even when I was racing go-karts I was watching the WTCC on Eurosport. Now it's very curious to be replacing him. He is such a good driver, a world champion, a kind of idol to me, and now he is my team manager. As a driver he is teaching Norbi and me a lot, giving us advice on qualifying, the race, tyre preparation, overtaking – how to make the driver's life easier. He is also a very good person, the best in my opinion. He's helping me a lot every single day."

But surely Tarquini would still prefer to be sitting where Azcona now finds himself... "I can imagine," Mikel smiles. "When you are driving all your life, then stop, but you are there in the paddock out of the car... if I'm not driving I cannot go to the track. Too frustrating!"

But still there are clouds, in what has been a tough time for the WTCR. The grid had already shrunk to just 17 cars over the winter before controversy exploded around Goodyear's spec tyres that led to an embarrassing last-minute cancellation of the Nurburgring Nordschleife races. That was bad enough. But when Cyan Racing then withdrew its five Lynk & Cos on the way to the grid at Vallelunga in protest over further tyre failures, the WTCR seemingly hit a new low – only to plummet further when Cyan pulled out of the series entirely ahead of the August round at the little-known Circuit de l'Anneau du Rhin. It's been a torrid season for a series Azcona insists is still "the highest-level touring car championship in the world".

What a shame Azcona has been robbed of the chance to beat reigning double champion Yann Ehrlacher on track. What has he made of the tyre dramas? "When you put the car on the limit with the maximum camber, changing the set-up to win the last tenth, it's obvious the tyre is suffering a lot," he says. "When we are having these tyre problems you need to think and find a compromise. If you go super-aggressive you will have problems. The frustrating thing at the Nordschleife was I competed in the 24 Hours with the same car, same tyres, same compound. The Lynk & Cos were having problems on only one lap in WTCR qualifying, and on the same tyres in the 24 Hours I was doing nine laps."

"DRIVING CAREFULLY IS PART OF THE GAME. YOU NEED TO ADAPT AND MAKE THE CAR SURVIVE WITH THE TYRE"

The Lynk & Cos haven't been alone in suffering tyre failures, as seen also at Vallelunga. "OK, the high 55-degree track temperatures didn't help anybody, and the track was very aggressive for the front-left tyre," says Azcona. "But if you see the races I was avoiding all the kerbs, avoiding compressions on the front left. I was driving so carefully and this is part of the game. Why should we need to cancel the race weekend because they have exploding tyres? You need to adapt and make the car survive with the tyre, otherwise the championship is cancelled every weekend."

But Hyundai has hardly been free of controversy itself. A new regulation means outright qualifying speed dictates the compensation weights each manufacturer will carry into the

Team boss Tarquini "a very good person, the best"

LENORMAND/DPPI

Azcona had grown up with Spanish brand Cupra

SAFRONOV/DPPI

TCR

Doubling up in "difficult" electric tin-tops is a challenge

next round, which has led to some sharp practices. At Motorland Aragon Girolami accused the Hyundais of sandbagging on Saturdays, sacrificing a shot at pole for a better grid slot in the reversed-grid race two — and ensuring a lower level of compensation weight for next time out at Vila Real.

Tarquini denied the claim at the time, but Azcona is a little more... open. "My opinion on BoP is I like the rule otherwise the championship would be killed very soon," he says. "If we are like Formula 1 without BoP and the best car is winning every weekend then the championship will die. It's very necessary, this tool. The regulation says the BoP is working like this and as a team and manufacturer you need to use this tool in the best way possible. If you go making all the poles every weekend you will get maximum kilograms and for certain the next weekend you will not be so competitive."

So were you backing off? "When you are fighting for the championship you always have to be very clever in these moments," he answers. We'll take that as a yes, then!

Back to more positive aspects. As he did last year with Cupra, Azcona is doubling up this season by also racing in the electric-powered Pure ETCR, now known as the eTouring Car World Cup, sometimes on the same bill. At Vallelunga he was crowned 'King of the Weekend' for the first time in a Hyundai, while also scoring podiums in WTCR.

"It's very difficult when you have maximum power of 700bhp," says Azcona of his potent rear-wheel-drive ETCR Veloster. "It is the most difficult thing I've done. The characteristics are very particular, the car is heavy, doesn't have a proper differential and we are using semi-slick [Goodyear] tyres. To make a perfect lap without any kind of tyre lock is tough. But if you do a perfect lap you really enjoy it because the car is so fast. As soon as you put maximum power on the throttle pedal you really feel the acceleration. It's a rocket."

So what about the future? At 26, he has decades potentially stretching out ahead of him — especially if he mimics his team manager and races until he's 59! At 15, Mikel and his father chose to curtail karting and focus on touring cars instead of single-seaters, thanks to a grounded sense of their financial reality. A wise choice. Endurance racing and specifically Le Mans appeals, but racing drivers tend to live in the present and Azcona is no different. Winning a world crown for Hyundai is all that matters now and, with four races to go, the countdown is on. Probably best to avoid Guerrieri just to be sure.

THE WTCR SEASON SO FAR

Nestor Girolami got off to a flying start by winning on the streets of Pau, but Mikel Azcona capped his first weekend for Hyundai with victory in the reversed-grid race when team-mate Norbert Michelisz clumsily took out fellow front row starter Attila Tassi in the opening seconds.

Following the disappointment of the Nurburgring Nordschleife cancellations, the World Touring Car Cup enjoyed a trouble-free weekend at the Hungaroring, where Azcona won again and jumped to the top of the standings, as the Munnich Motorsport Hondas struggled with their sizeable levels of compensation weight (aka success ballast). In the reversed-grid race, Zengo's Rob Huff sprung

"NOW WITH JUST 11 CARS ON THE GRID, POINTS ARE GUARANTEED FOR ALL FINISHERS"

to the fore as his Cupra pressured winner Santiago Urrutia, who claimed Cyan Lynk & Co's first win of the year.

Azcona claimed a third victory in six races with a reversed-grid win at home at Motorland Aragon, opening up a 34-point lead over Gilles Magnus, on top in the main race for Comtoyou Audi. But in Vila Real, Lynk & Co hit back, even if Cyan tied itself in knots with a team orders call in favour of Urrutia over double champion Yann Ehrlacher that sparked speculation about the Frenchman's future. Huff's splendid win in the reversed-grid race was well deserved, and Azcona's lead was cut to 16 points.

But at Vallelunga, as Cyan pulled its Lynk & Cos from the races and Girolami and Magnus took the wins, Azcona notched a pair of podiums to expand his lead once more. He maitained a gap at a Cyan-less l'Anneau du Rhin as Huff secured the WTCR Trophy for independent entries super-early with his second win of the year, and Nathanael Berthon added a victory for Audi.

The final rounds will be held in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia in November, as ongoing COVID restrictions played havoc with the previously scheduled Asian leg. Now with just 11 cars on the grid, points are guaranteed for all finishers. Girolami is the most realistic title challenger to Azcona, 35 points down, with Huff and Magnus a distant third and fourth.

Absence of Lynk & Cos has been a big blow

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MSV

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Key responsibilities will include:

- Assisting with the design of the Group's websites, mobile phone applications and email templates
- Creating graphics, logos and banners (both static and animated) for website and social media use
- Creating engaging motion images / videos to really bring our sport/brand to life!
- Designing print artwork such as posters for race events, adverts, souvenir programmes, brochures, signage and leaflets
- Assisting with the design of MSV merchandise and gift items
- Assisting on other general projects to meet the needs of the business, including vehicle livery design and digital and printed presentations
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- Have the ability to follow both written and verbal instruction.
- Show great dexterity and co-ordination
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- Have excellent work ethic and able to work within a team as well as independently
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- Work as part of a team on the definition and solution of problems that may be affecting the quality, cost productivity of the vehicles being produced
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- Experience interviewing / HR policies and contract negotiations
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- The role may require travel throughout the year and therefore requires you to have an up-to-date passport at all times.

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- A minimum of 3 years' experience working in the classic car restoration field.
- The ability to work to concours level standards of fit and finish.
- To be able to work well both as part of a small professional team and independently, problem solving and performing under pressure when required, such as at race meetings when time is in short supply.
- A genuine 'in the blood' enthusiasm for the classic car world.
- Ideally, though not necessarily essential, experience of working on Italian cars of the 60s to 80s, in particular the Alfa Romeo marque.
- Full, clean UK Driving license (Essential). Towing experience/license would be useful, though not essential.

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British GT **Sims to return with Century**

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In at the deep end

Autosport's adventure with the Ma7da Championship

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Firman to return Van Diemen name to the tracks with new car

New car is due to be delivered in time for Van Diemen's 50th anniversary next year

VANDIEMENRF.COM

SCCA P1

Van Diemen is set to hit the tracks again in 2023 under the control of ex-Formula 1 driver, Macau Grand Prix winner and Japanese racing champion Ralph Firman Jr, son of marque co-founder Ralph Sr.

Firman has relaunched the Van Diemen name in a collaboration with former Pacific F1 and Indycar team boss Keith Wiggins, whose Pacific Racing squad carried Bertrand Gachot to the British Formula Ford 1600 title in 1985 with the groundbreaking Van Diemen RF85. Wiggins heads up the company's US operations in Indianapolis.

The highly respected Andy Thorby, best known for his work on the 1991 TOM'S 031F Formula 3 car and who played a key role in Panoz and McLaren GT sportscar projects, has designed a chassis that will initially compete in US sportscar racing in the SCCA's P1 category and be available for trackday use in the UK.

"We're cracking on with it, and it's all exciting stuff," said Firman. "This has been going on for a while – we started work late in 2020 during COVID, when an exciting opportunity presented itself. We've designed what is essentially an FIA Formula 3 chassis, which we'd like to use for multiple purposes for racing championships and trackdays, to try and spread our net over as many clients as possible."

The car is designed to be flexible for 350bhp, 440bhp and 550bhp engines. "For the US we've designed it to fit a 2.5-litre Mazda, but it's up to customers to decide which engine they want to use for each market," added Firman. "For the UK, we've got a 2.3-litre Ford EcoBoost built by Mountune."

Longer term, Firman wants to return Van Diemen to its traditional single-seater market, in which it was dominant from the 1970s to the 2000s: "That's why we've done a car to FIA F3 rules, so we can get back to our heritage and start pitching for these championships to try to lower the costs for drivers. It would be nice to see the costs come down and spread the net for a wider audience. We'll try to keep the company lean and mean, with low overheads."

The cars will be produced from the old Van Diemen factory near Snetterton. "We've given it a lick of paint!" said Firman, whose father remains on board: "His experience is essential." The head office will be at Silverstone.

Manufacturing is under way, with the initial cars – named RF350 – expected to be delivered as early as February.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Morrell has switched to Valour for rest of 2022

STEVE JONES

Champion Morrell swaps team

BIKESPORTS

Defending Bikesports champion Leon Morrell has switched from North Motorsport to Valour Racing for the remainder of the 2022 season.

On his debut with Valour at Silverstone last month, Morrell – who is currently second in the Class B standings ahead of the latest round at Anglesey this weekend – took seventh, third and fourth place results in his Radical SR3.

"I've had a disagreement with another driver at North Motorsport so me leaving was for the easiest and I've had a relationship with Valour for four years," Morrell explained.

"This does not affect my relationship with Sam North [team boss] and his crew – we get on just as well as we ever did."

North said: "It's a shame to see Leon go – he's a good friend of mine – but unfortunately we couldn't make the situation work."

CARL McKELLAR

Sims to return to British GT for final two rounds

GALLOWAY/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

BRITISH GT

Ex-Formula E driver Alexander Sims will return to the British GT Championship for the final two rounds of the season.

The 34-year-old Briton will race a Century Motorsport-run BMW M4 GT3 for this weekend's Brands Hatch event and the season finale at Donington Park in October alongside Ginetta GT4 Supercup graduates Henry Dawes and Darren Leung respectively.

"It's largely been driven by Nathan [Freke, team boss] and Century having an opportunity and wanting a factory driver, and it's something I jumped at the chance of doing," said Sims, who since 2018 has raced in FE, first with BMW Andretti, then Mahindra, taking one win.

"It's going to be a bit tough performance-wise for Brands Hatch as we're not able to test the car beforehand so we're in at the deep end. I'm under no illusions, it will be very tough.

"It's easy from the outside looking in to think of British GT as a Pro-Am championship, but some of the weekends that I did [in the championship] were really up there in terms of the amount of pressure on the Pro drivers."

The event will represent Sims's first participation in the series since 2016, when he made five appearances in a Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3.

He had previously been a series regular in a Barwell-run BMW Z4 GT3, entered under the Ecurie Ecosse banner, in 2014 and 2015. He collected two wins in 2014 and helped co-driver Marco Attard claim the overall GT3 title, before finishing second in the rankings the following year.

Sims's exploits earned him his BMW factory driver status, allowing him to compete in a variety of endurance championships, which included winning the 2016 Spa 24 Hours with Rowe Racing's BMW M6 GT3.

While there are no plans for a full-time British GT campaign, Sims is open to the idea of returning for the occasional round in 2023 if the opportunity arises.

"I'm always open to racing in British GT as this weekend and Donington will show," he added. "BMW asked me to do it and, if that situation occurs again, most likely the answer will be yes again."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Keen to miss British GT race for first time since 2012

BRITISH GT

British GT frontrunners Phil Keen and Michael Igoe will miss this weekend's Brands Hatch event, despite still mathematically having a chance of claiming the title.

The WPI Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan duo sit second in the standings but more than 30 points behind RAM Racing Mercedes driver Ian Loggie, who can secure the overall GT3 crown this weekend – even with the result from the previous Spa round being provisional with an appeal by race winner Fox Motorsport yet to be heard.

Keen's absence will be the first time since 2012 that he has missed a British GT event, and has been caused by Igoe's work commitments.

"His phone never stops and he's running around everywhere and it becomes more of an inconvenience rather than an enjoyment," said Keen. "We finished on the podium at Snetterton but he couldn't really enjoy it because he had to get back to work and it shouldn't really be like that.

"He likes to do things properly and I think he just feels he can't give it 100% because of what is going on. It's a shame for everybody but at the same time it's the right decision for him."

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Lamborghini driver Keen hopes to be back out soon

Keen added that he would possibly look to get out for the final event of the season at Donington Park. "For sure I'll be looking at options and see if we can get back on the grid next year or the last round," he said.

STEFAN MACKLEY

White (inset) and Brown remain in hospital after Thruxton collision

JEP

motorsport IMAGES

Brown and White "recovering well" after Thruxton crash

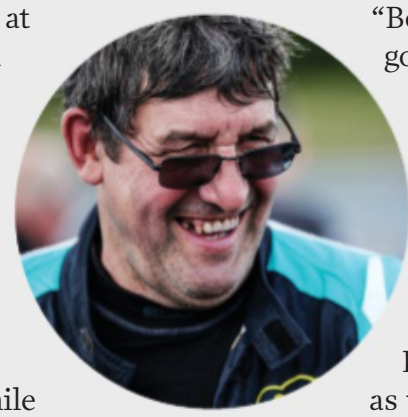
GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Ginetta GT4 Supercup drivers Mike Brown and Colin White are said to be "recovering well" from a serious accident at Thruxton last month as both remain in hospital.

The high-speed crash occurred when Brown lost control out of the fast Church corner and veered into the path of White's G56 up Woodham Hill. This sent White's CWS car into a frightening series of rolls, while there was a heavy impact for Brown.

While White was taken to Southampton General Hospital by road ambulance, having suffered two fractured vertebrae, Brown needed extracting from his Ultimate Speed Racing G56 and was airlifted to the same hospital with multiple injuries.

Ginetta has provided an update on both drivers as they continue their recoveries.



"Both Colin and Mike are in good spirits," read the statement. "They, along with their families and teams, would like to thank the race marshals, TOCA medical team, ambulance crews and the staff at Southampton General Hospital for their great work, as well as to everyone in the Ginetta paddock that offered their support on the day and since.

"Ginetta echo those sentiments and wish Colin and Mike all the best on their roads to recovery."

Trackday accident to be investigated

CASTLE COMBE

The Castle Combe Circuit will launch a review following an accident last weekend at the Wiltshire venue during a trackday that left two people in hospital.

The incident occurred on Saturday shortly after midday, when a BMW was launched into a series of rolls up Avon Rise after contact with another car during the Forge Action Day event.

Wiltshire Police attended the incident and confirmed that the driver, a man in his twenties from Chepstow, Wales, suffered minor injuries.

The passenger, a woman in her twenties from Blackwood, Wales, suffered serious injuries but they are not believed to be life-threatening or life-changing.

A statement from the circuit read: "Castle Combe Circuit has, and always has had, rigid safety procedures in place before anyone carries out track time at the venue.

"This is the first time an incident of this kind has occurred during an Action Day event over the many years that they have been held.

"We will be holding a thorough debrief meeting and review in due course, with further updates being made accordingly."

IN THE HEADLINES

KNOCKHILL NOMINATED

The Knockhill Circuit has been nominated for the Scottish Thistle Awards' Outstanding Sporting Event for this year's British Touring Car Championship meeting. Knockhill director of events Stuart Gray said: "A huge thanks to all the Knockhill team and everyone who helped deliver these great events. They were pretty special after everything we've been through in the last three years."

RICHINGS TO RETIRE

Clubmans stalwart Peter Richings will call time on his racing career after 51 consecutive seasons, 41 of them in the Clubmans category. A multiple champion who started racing in 1972 in an MG Midget, he has two more race meetings this season and will then sell his Mallock Mk30. He will, however, continue to take part in competition – he is now sharing a Toyota Yaris GR in speed events with his wife Joy.

PODIUMS ON DEBUT

Arron Armiger and Connor Harvey both secured three podium finishes in the CNC Heads Sports & Saloons on their race debuts at Anglesey last weekend. Armiger was third in the opening race and second in the other two, racing the family Vauxhall Tigra previously seen in the hands of elder brother Luke. Harvey, whose father Dave raced in the championship with a Locosaki, won his class in all three outings with his Caterham.

WINROW WRAPS UP TITLE

Jamie Winrow was crowned Caterham Graduates Sigma 135 champion after his winning treble at Anglesey (below) made it 14 successive wins this season. "Some tracks I am better at, but none are easy, but this week it just felt like the car was on rails," he said. "I have won maybe six or seven races other years, but nothing like this before." Racing runs in the family, with father Rob an ex-racer and brother Ben competing in the Sigma 150s.

SCOTT MITCHELL

Gobstopper 3 to MotoFest Coventry sprint

Clark will be aiming to beat his previous Coventry record in Subaru BRZ creation

SPRINT

The unique 'Gobstopper 3' Subaru BRZ creation will be among the cars taking part when competitive motorsport returns to the streets of Coventry for the first time in three years this weekend at the MotoFest event.

With the pandemic forcing the fixture to be scaled back, the closed-roads sprint around the city's ring road will be back for this year after the event was moved to a new September date for 2022 to avoid clashing with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations during its traditional June slot.

The Coventry sprint forms part of the British Automobile Racing Club's Connaught Speed Championship, and current lap record holder Olly Clark topped the times in 2018 in the original Gobstopper. He will attempt to emulate that this weekend in the 930bhp turbocharged Gobstopper 3.

MotoFest Coventry motorsport director Darren Langeveld said: "We are excited to have Olly Clark, the RCM team and Gobstopper 3 taking part in the sprint at this year's festival.

"The Gobstopper 3 is an awesome sprint car that's going to generate a lot of interest across the festival weekend, and with Olly behind the wheel there is a good chance that the lap record could be lowered again."

In addition to the sprint action, the Formula G series — the UK's gymkhana category — will be in action. Scores of other modern and classic cars will also take part in demonstration runs around the circuit, including around 70 members of the Supercar Drivers Club due to take to the track, while hundreds of other cars and bikes will be on display.

There will also be a focus on the future of motoring, with a special area dedicated to new technologies, including electric vehicles, cars powered by alternative fuels and autonomous machines.

Grehan takes first BHRC win on Woodpecker

Escort driver took spoils on his local event

PAUL LAWRENCE

HISTORIC RALLYING

There was a local 1-2 British Historic Rally finish on the Woodpecker Rally in the Welsh borders last Saturday, as Ludlow-based Henri Grehan scored his first win at this level.

Rallying in his own backyard, Grehan took the fight to the Fiat 131s of Matt Edwards and Nick Elliott and pushed his Ford Escort Mk2 to the limit on his local stages.

Heading into the final stage in the Radnor forest, Grehan and Edwards were tied on time, but only Grehan emerged from the test after a rear suspension failure on the Fiat left Edwards a non-finisher.

Robert Gough made it a great day for the home teams by finishing second in his Escort Mk2, before Elliott rounded out the top three in the best of the Fiats. Grehan's emotional victory moves him further ahead in the standings with two events to run.

PAUL LAWRENCE

VW Special Saloon powered Enderby to 85 wins from 1982-91

GARY HAWKINS

Enderby returns Karmann Ghia to the track after 30 years

SPECIAL SALOONS

Special Saloon racing legend Doctor David Enderby's Volkswagen Karmann Ghia – based on a Tiga SC79 Sports 2000 chassis – hit the track for the first time in almost 31 years at Brands Hatch on Tuesday.

The 1700cc Ford BDA-engined giantslayer, in which Enderby won the British Automobile Racing Club's championship in 1990 and his class in the BHL Silhouettes series in 1991, was mothballed thereafter. Debuted at Brands in November 1982, with one-litre Chrysler Imp power, it carried the Doc to 85 wins.

Enderby, now 80, subsequently raced Global Light and Radical SR4 sportscars with son Christian, but has not competed for several seasons. His ambition to recommission the Karmann Ghia was stalled by the COVID-19 pandemic, but can now move forward with plans to race it next season.

"The old car felt surprisingly good," enthused the multiple champion. "It goes round corners quite well, but is very pointy so we'll work on the front suspension geometry. I put the rear wing up at one point, which made it understeer like mad, so it felt pretty sensitive to adjustment.

"There was a misfire all morning, so we removed the rev limiter [which cured it], then altered the mixture on the fuel injection, but I'm thinking we'll have to go back to the rolling road to set it up again."

MARCUS PYE

Former MG star Rogerson in Jaguars

CSCC

One-time MG Owners' Club champion Andrew Rogerson plans to race more regularly in rear-wheel-drive machinery after impressing on three outings in Jaguars this year.

Rogerson took his MG ZR to the MGOC title in 2015 before focusing on his young family. On his debut in Colin Philpott's Jaguar XJS at Oulton Park at the end of last month, he qualified third fastest in the Classic Sports Car Club's Modern Classics series. Unfortunately, the pair were unable to start the race after the car suffered suspected head-gasket failure.

The Oulton outing came after Rogerson's first taste of rear-wheel drive, sharing Michael Holt's Jaguar X300 in previous rounds at Brands Hatch and Castle Combe.

"Colin Philpott has known me since I was little," explained Rogerson. "During lockdown, he wanted me to come and do EnduroKa with him. So I did that and helped the other guys come forward and then Colin said, 'I want you to do a bit of Jags stuff with me.'"

Rogerson is set to share Neal Blakes's Porsche Boxster in this weekend's Modern Classics round at Donington Park, and may contest next year's Classic Touring Car Racing Club Jaguar Challenge.

MARK PAULSON

IN THE HEADLINES

SPECIAL NAPIERS TO REUNITE

The 120th anniversary of the first British victory in international motorsport will be celebrated on this year's London to Brighton Veteran Car Run. The Napier that powered Selwyn Francis Edge to Gordon Bennett Cup glory in 1902 will be reunited with its two sister machines from the following year at the 6 November event.

RYDER MISSES OUT

This year's British Hillclimb Championship rising star Matthew Ryder missed the competition at Prescott last Sunday after the gearbox casing of his Gould GR59 failed at the start of his final practice run. He was due to share the car with its creator Sean Gould, and the Ryder team now faces a battle to have the car ready for the Loton Park finale on 24-25 September.

NIGEL BANCROFT 1953-2022

The Historic Formula Ford fraternity was stunned by the sudden death of Nigel Bancroft, just three weeks after his return to the grid following a decade away. The garage proprietor suffered a heart attack while enjoying a break in Anglesey with wife Gail. Son of Standard Triumph agent Ken Bancroft – a renowned rally driver and team prize winner in a Morgan on the 1952 RAC Rally – Nigel was a race winner in his FF1600 Crossle 20F, engine builder Tony Mantle's 1000cc F3 Chevron B17, and a 2.5-litre Cooper-Climax T51 F1 car he restored.

CLASSIC KEEPS NEW DATE

The Silverstone Classic (below) will again be held over the late August Bank Holiday weekend next year, after attracting a record crowd for this season's event, when it moved from its traditional July slot. Tickets are due to go on sale later this year and show-goers can register in advance to secure admission for the best price.

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HISTORIC

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Barry Sheppard 1943-2022

OBITUARY

Sheppard (second from right) was involved in Rawlson CR8

Croydon-born Barry Sheppard, who died last month aged 78, was a gifted and well-connected artisan with an extraordinary eye for detail. His creative role in motorsport was considerable, far more influential than his quiet manner suggested.

Sheppard was selling insurance when he became fascinated by the Lotus 23-derived 1300cc Ford-powered Rawlson CR6 that client Mike Rawlings had built. Sheppard modified it heavily for Phil de Banks for the 1969 Nurburgring 500km.

Sheppard duly joined Rawlings, Nigel Cooper and associates to create the CR7, of which several bodies were sold. Gerry Marshall raced the works car in return for beer. The CR8, with chassis designed by Roger Parker, attracted buyers in France.

The ill-starred 4.5-litre Oldsmobile V8-powered aluminium monocoque CR10 was entered — as a Costello SP7 — in the 1972 Rothmans 50,000 at Brands Hatch, then taken to Canada for Can-Am.

Sheppard then took over Rawlson Ltd when Rawlings left in the 1970s. As well as creating the Frank Costin-designed bodies for Bill Blydenstein's Dealer Team Vauxhall Ventora 'Big Bertha' and Firenza 'Baby Bertha' Super Saloon projects raced by Marshall, it mastered droop snoot noses for Firenzas, body kits for Chevette HSRs and panels for the Carlton raced by John Cleland/Vince Woodman.

Rawlson produced bodies for Formula 1 Tyrrells to FF1600 Quests, and the carbon composite body for Hugh Chamberlain's Spice in which Nick Adams and Fermin Velez won the 1989 World C2 title. Sheppard also made parts for European-spec Dodge Viper RT10 hardtops and bodywork for son Max's 750 Formula racer.

He returned to racing in the 1990s, using a Sports 2000 Lola before building up another Nomad Mk1 with originators Bob Curl and Mark Konig. The pretty green coupe brought enjoyment at home and on several trips to South Africa. He hung up his helmet when sons Guy and Max rebuilt the Sports 2000.

GUY SHEPPARD & MARCUS PYE

Ted Williams 1938-2022

OBITUARY

Williams raced all over the world, here in his Cooper T49 at Macau

Ted Williams, who died last month aged 84, had a sparkling competition career spanning karts, motorcycles, hydroplanes, powerboats and cars over more than 50 years. But the jovial Nailsea-based motor trader and property business owner was so much more than a crowd-pleaser on track. He was always at the hub of the social scene at speed events and the circuits to which he returned with some sensational machinery.

Williams started competing in clubbie events in 1962 with a Formula Junior Elva 100, followed by a Mini and the Ford Anglia in which he earned Autosport plaudits for leading and finishing second at Castle Combe in 1964. He subsequently had a big accident in a Lotus Cortina that led him to focus on business interests.

The bug still bit, however, and Williams returned to top-level hillclimbing with an ex-Roy Baker March-Hart 75B/752. Then, in 1980, he rearmed with a Hesketh-DFV 308E, in which son Mark won British Sprint rounds, but Ted's big day came back on the hills at Wiscombe Park in September 1981. In a 2.5-litre Pilbeam-Hart MP40-01, he scored a coveted round win.

The following year, he returned to the tracks with the last of three March-Chevrolet 707 Can-Am/Interserie cars nicknamed 'Boeings'. Williams won some tremendous International SuperSports Cup races at home and abroad — at Nurburgring, Montlhery and Zandvoort — over several seasons in that and a McLaren M8. A move into Historic F1 followed, when Williams piloted an ex-Raul Boesel Ligier JS21, an Arrows A4 and a 'tea tray' March 711, but he later scaled back to a 1960 Cooper Monaco T49 sportscar, an Austin-Healey 3000 and an AC Cobra.

His legacy is immortalised in the naming of Turn 2 'Williams' at the Okayama International Circuit in Japan (formerly TI Circuit Aida) to which David Piper led a 1990 SuperSports expedition.

MARCUS PYE

Evans leads Smith in close-fought Aurora/Geoff Lees Trophy opener

Evans entertains as Harrison claims four from four

CROFT
HSCC
3-4 SEPTEMBER

The spectacle of Richard Evans in the ex-Eddie Cheever March-BMW 782 and Rory Smith's ground-effect Atlantic Ralt RT4/85 howling round together in the Aurora/Geoff Lees Trophy races wowed a large audience as the Historic Sports Car Club's Croft Nostalgia event returned after a two-year absence. But Riponian Samuel Harrison, 18, stole the show, winning all four 1000cc Formula 3 and Historic FF1600 races and the latter's championship before heading to study aerospace engineering at Loughborough University.

Harrison started racing cars in 2020 but, having not driven Croft, 20 miles from home, was obliged to attend a new drivers' briefing. He had 12 wins under his belt already this term, and the superb 2.1-mile track soon bolstered his CV. A combined 2m14.866s margin of victory tells its own story. Unbeaten in six previous Historic F3 starts in Speedsport's ex-Terry McGrath/Geoff Bremner Chevron B15, Harrison left the rest floundering in Saturday's rain, as Josh Sharp (B17) excelled in beating points leader Simon Armer (March 703) to second. Harrison's dry win over Armer leaves the double champ seven points clear. Sharp recovered from exploring Sunny Out's greensward to regain third from Peter Hamilton (Tecno).

It was a similar story in Mike O'Brien's Classic Team Merlyn, Harrison clinching the coveted crown on Saturday, 38 seconds clear of Oliver Chapman (Lola T200) and Irishman Cormac Flanagan (Alexis Mk14). Callum Grant entered the second race after winning Sunday's Classic FF1600 opener and claimed silver from the back, with Rob Smith third after an excursion to miss Flanagan's three-wheeler at the chicane.

Grant, Tom McArthur and reigning champ Jordan Harrison's epic Classic FF1600 lead scrap was defused when McArthur spun at Sunny. Grant just avoided the Hawke DL2, but Harrison caught its rear corner. With no spare front upright for Harrison's Lola T540E, Hadfield Motorsport (which runs McArthur) loaned him its Titan Mk4 for the finale. McArthur and Harrison hared through to chase Grant home.

Historic FF2000 title protagonists Benn Simms and Graham Fennymore won another race apiece. Fennymore spun on lap one of Saturday's wet round but recovered to fifth as Alex Fores (in Graham Ridgway's Reynard) and Drew Cameron (Royale RP27) chased Simms. After ousting Fennymore at Sunday's restart, Simms pipped him home, but a 10s jump-start penalty left him fifth. Cameron and Lee Bankhurst (RP30) completed the podium.

Saturday's Aurora race was stopped for zero visibility in the spray, then abandoned — with Evans ahead at a venue where dad Jim raced F2 cars in Formule Libre — after John Hayes-Harlow crashed his Ehrlich heavily approaching Barcroft, without injury. Smith won Sunday's race from Ridgway, flying in his recently acquired March 742.

Debutant Cliff Butler scored an unlikely 70s Road Sports/80s Production victory from 12th in his Vauxhall Carlton. Peter Hore's spinning Porsche 924 clobbered it in the Complex, sending Matt Nichols's and Steve Bellerby's TVR 3000Ms scurrying past on both sides, but the wounded tank picked off allcomers, ultimately finishing ahead of a wonderful duel between multiple champion Jeremy Clark (Lotus Elan S4) and Howard Payne's Europa. Payne's throttle cable detached at Sunday's start, but everybody missed him. Clark squeezed past Butler, and Antony Ross's improving TVR 3000M also beat the Vauxhall home.

The contrast between Historic Road Sports conditions was stark, but John Davison won both "on my favourite circuit" in his black Elan. The reigning champion puddle-jumped clear of John Shaw (Morgan +8), who beat Kevin Kivlochan (AC Cobra) to V8 gold on Saturday. Davison outbraked 'Keki' into Clervaux on Sunday, when the track remained slippery, and stayed there.

Harrison grabbed four wins and the Historic FF1600 crown

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

HISTORIC F3
Races 1 & 2 Samuel Harrison (Chevron B15)

HISTORIC FF1600
Races 1 & 2 Samuel Harrison (Merlyn Mk20)

CLASSIC FF1600
Races 1 & 2 Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A)

HISTORIC FF2000
Race 1 Benn Simms (Reynard SF77)
Race 2 Graham Fennymore (Reynard SF81)

AURORA/GEOFF LEES TROPHY
Race 1 Richard Evans (March-BMW 782)
Race 2 Rory Smith (Ralt-BDA RT4/85)

70s ROAD SPORTS/80s PRODUCTION
Race 1 Cliff Butler (Vauxhall Carlton, below)
Race 2 Jeremy Clark (Lotus Elan S4)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS
Races 1 & 2 John Davison (Lotus Elan S1)

HISTORIC TOURING CARS
Race 1 Barry Sime (Morris Mini Cooper S)
Race 2 Neil Wood (Ford Anglia 105E)

CLASSIC CLUBMANS
Race 1 Trevor Welsh (Lola T492)
Race 2 Clive Wood (Mallock Mk20B)

GUARDS TROPHY
Simon Jackson (Lenham-t/c P70)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

PARK'S TRANSATLANTIC MARCH Four-time Historic FF2000 champion Andy Park graduated to a Formula Atlantic March 79B at Croft, although the US-import chassis 22 was far from race ready. With its rebuilt BDA engine blunted by electrical and carburettor gremlins in Friday's testing, Park and father Pete began to make progress over the weekend, taking seventh in the opener. The prospect of Park, Callum Grant (79B) and Tom Bradshaw (78B) battling next season is a mouthwatering one.

JACKSON'S LENHAM WIN "We've been trying to win one of these for two years, and it turned out I didn't need my sons [Cameron and Dominik]," smiled Simon Jackson after Guards Trophy victory in his Lenham. In a full-blooded dice with runaway Donington and Oulton Park winner Steve Nuttall, the latter's B8 lost a door mirror when they touched at Tower, before drama unfolded on the sweepers. "The nose lifted, then flew over the roof," said Nuttall. Undaunted, he led again before taking second.

"Mini weather" enabled Scot Barry Sime to beat buddy Phil House in Saturday's Touring Car bout. When young points leader Harry Barton (BMW 1800Ti) was excluded from third, having T-boned Kiwi Warren Briggs's Mustang at the hairpin, Roger Godfrey and Steve Youle completed a Cooper S top four. Neil Wood fired his raucous Ford Anglia clear on Sunday, rueing that Briggs was too far behind to challenge.

Saturday's soggy Classic Clubmans opener featured sole A-Sport starter Adrian Holey spinning his Mallock into the barrier at Hawthorn within seconds. Sports 2000 Lola-mounted Trevor Welsh dominated the restart, with FF1600-engined ace Clive Wood in pursuit. After overnight rain, Wood bested Welsh on Sunday, leaving him to dice with wet-shod Barry Webb.

MARCUS PYE

REYNARD FRIENDS REUNITED Reynard founder Adrian Reynard (centre) and subsequent chief designer Malcolm Oastler (left) raced together in Historic FF2000. Australian Oastler, 63, drove Reynard's spare, Jeremy Rossiter's period SF78, and Reynard an SF79 dressed as his Euroseries winner. Oastler last raced in the UK in 1985 in FF2000 in a Van Diemen run by compatriots the Farrell brothers' Milldent Motorsport – BTCC engineer Steve Farrell (right) has restarted racing this year in the black SF79.

O'Brien and Jordan share Se7en spoils

ANGLESEY
BARC
3-4 SEPTEMBER

Jordan leads wet opener but O'Brien would finish in front of him

Connor O'Brien and Mike Jordan shared the Mini Se7en spoils in two Anglesey races held in very contrasting conditions.

It was wet for their first outing. Jordan, O'Brien and Joe Thompson made an early break, with Thompson taking charge through Church on the third lap. All three had spells in front, before O'Brien held top spot again definitively from lap seven of 13. Thompson was a clear second after Jordan lost ground.

O'Brien demoted early leader Ross Billison into Rocket on the second lap of a dry race two, with Jordan also getting through at the Corkscrew a few laps later. It was soon a duel for the lead, with Jordan making the decisive move into Rocket on lap nine of 15. O'Brien threatened again briefly, but it was Jordan's win with Billison a solitary third.

It was a good weekend for the Jordan family as Mike's son Andrew scored a double victory in the Mini Miglias. With Jeff Smith, Aaron Smith and Ashley Davies all out after a collision at Rocket on the first lap of race one, Jordan and Rupert Deeth broke clear. Deeth stayed close but couldn't challenge, while Kane Astin got the better of Ben Colburn into Rocket four laps from home to complete the podium.

It was Deeth with the early advantage in race two, while Jordan took Colburn for second into Rocket on lap three. With a seven-car train for the lead heading to Rocket a lap later, Deeth ran wide and Jordan, Lewis Selby and Colburn all went by. Jordan then eased away to secure his second win, while Deeth reclaimed second into Peel two laps from home. Colburn this time held onto third.

Jamie Winrow was unbeatable again in the Caterham Graduates Sigma 135s. After passing James McCall on the second lap of race one, he won by 18 seconds, with McCall just holding off John Hood for the runner-up spot. Tom Power made Winrow work harder for his next win, and finished 2.5s behind, while Giles Derry completed the podium. It was then a lights-to-flag victory for Winrow in race three, which also clinched him the title, while Richard Groom just held onto second from Power.

There were three different winners in the Sigma 150/Sigmax races. Harry Cramer's

Burgess and Bridge denied double success

OULTON PARK
MGCC
3 SEPTEMBER

Two drivers in successive MG Car Club races had the misfortune of being denied a double victory at Oulton Park by retiring on the last lap.

Jason Burgess was the first driver to fall at the final hurdle, missing out on a second win in the MG Trophy when two studs failed on his front-left wheel, causing serious vibrations that ruled him out. "I had a little bit of contact with Adam [Jackson] earlier in the race and my mechanic thinks that might have caused it," said Burgess.

Bridge retired in second Midget and Sprite race

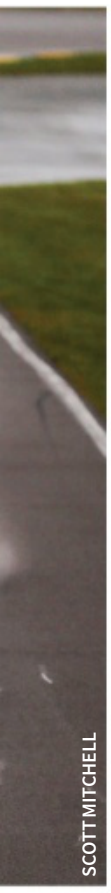
Jackson had made the better start, but Burgess tracked him down and got a good run up Clay Hill on lap three of 11. The pair ran alongside each other for half a lap — which is when the contact occurred — before Burgess finally sealed the move at Cascades. When he pulled off seven laps later, Jackson inherited a win of almost 10 seconds over Ross Makar, all three in Class A ZR 190s.

Earlier, Burgess had been successful while Jackson had a dramatic race, not helped by damper failure. He led at first, while Burgess tried to go around the outside at Cascades on lap two before sealing the move at Island Bend. Jackson then had a huge moment at Cascades on the following tour, almost ending up on the section of track heading in the opposite direction from Hill Top, but he rejoined last and came back to sixth overall. Burgess was threatened by Makar for a while mid-race, before easing away in the final two laps.

Of more significance in the championship, Class B drivers Joseph Dalgarno and Josh Bromley, who were separated by a single point at the top of the standings at the start of the day, shared a win apiece in their ZR 170s, with Bromley coming out on top of a particularly frantic scrap in race two.

The other driver to be dealt a late blow was Richard Bridge, who had already won a largely uninspiring Midget and Sprite Challenge opener in his slick-shod Austin-Healey. He looked set to repeat the feat in race two, but his commanding advantage was depleted with four laps to go.

"I was just cooling it off as I was only racing against the clock really," he said. "I've done a diff or a halfshaft or something — I just lost drive." Pippa Cow in her Sprite


SCOTT MITCHELL

Winrow was unstoppable in Caterham Graduates Sigma 135 category
SCOTT MITCHELL

150 led race one from before half distance, with Stephen Clark second and Sigmax winner Max Haynes third.

No one could stop Sigmax driver Kevin Barrett taking a lights-to-flag win in race two, with the 150s of Clark and Harry Senior following. Haynes then got his win in the final race after duelling throughout with Sigmax rival Barrett, while third-placed Clark topped the 150s again.

Daire Flock won the first of the Junior Saloon races, restarted after Oskar Dix's roll at Rocket. Maximus Hall kept the pressure on after a safety car interlude, while Adam Harding fended off Harry Hickton for third.

Hickton was victorious in both of the other races. In race two, he led from Peel on lap two and held off Harding's challenge following another safety car intervention. In the finale, Hickton was in charge from the opening tour, but both Flock and Harding stayed close.

Jon Woolfitt's Spire was a lights-to-flag victor in all three CNC Heads Sports & Saloons races while, after wins in the first two Superkart contests, Liam Morley lost out to Lee Harpham in the third.

PETER SCHERER

Burgess leads the MG Trophy field but lost out on victory in race two
MICK WALKER

gratefully inherited the win from James Hughes, while young Connor Kay bagged a podium and Class D win in his Midget after two well-driven races.

Keith Egar was one of two drivers who did manage to bag a brace, taking his ZR 190-engined Midget to Cockshoot Cup success. He wasn't leading onto the last lap of the first race, but Paul Wignall had a heavy off in his ZS 180 at the Avenue. Fergus Campbell (ZR 170) was not headed in the two MG Cup contests.

Dan Willars emerged as winner of the first Metro Cup race when Mark Eales was penalised for an out-of-position start, with Eales getting the better of Mike Williams in the second contest.

Andrew Thompson ran away with the opening Morgan race in his ARV6, but Roger Whiteside's +8 came on strong later in the day to turn the tables.

IAN SOWMAN

WEEKEND WINNERS

ANGLESEY

MINI SE7EN
Race 1 Connor O'Brien
Race 2 Mike Jordan

MINI MIGLIA
Races 1 & 2 Andrew Jordan (below)

CATERHAM GRADUATES (SIGMA 135)
Races 1, 2 & 3 Jamie Winrow

CATERHAM GRADUATES (SIGMA 150/SIGMAX)
Race 1 Harry Cramer (Sigma 150)
Race 2 Kevin Barrett (Sigmax)
Race 3 Max Haynes (Sigmax)

JUNIOR SALOONS
Race 1 Daire Flock
Races 2 & 3 Harry Hickton

CNC HEADS SPORTS & SALOONS
Races 1, 2, & 3 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GTR)

SUPERKARTS
Races 1 & 2 Liam Morley (Anderson VM)
Race 3 Lee Harpham (MS Kart/Harvey VM)

SCOTT MITCHELL

OULTON PARK

MG TROPHY
Race 1 Jason Burgess (ZR 190)
Race 2 Adam Jackson (ZR 190)

MIDGET AND SPRITE CHALLENGE
Race 1 Richard Bridge (Austin-Healey Sprite MkII)
Race 2 Pippa Cow (Austin-Healey Sprite)

COCKSHOOT CUP
Races 1 & 2 Keith Egar (MG Midget)

MG CUP
Races 1 & 2 Fergus Campbell (ZR 170)

MG METRO CUP
Race 1 Dan Willars (Rover Metro GTI)
Race 2 Mark Eales (Rover Metro GTI)

MORGAN CHALLENGE
Race 1 Andrew Thompson (ARV6, below)
Race 2 Roger Whiteside (+8)

MICK WALKER

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Pryce is right to make Ceredigion tyre gamble

RALI CEREDIGION
BRC
3-4 SEPTEMBER

Local driver took advantage when Cronin rolled out

Osian Pryce could almost feel the weight of the world lifting off his shoulders on Sunday night, after he ensured that his campaign to finally become British Rally champion remains on course by taking the maximum points haul at an impressive Rali Ceredigion.

While the Welshman couldn't live with the pace of the eventual rally winner, World Rally Championship ace and former Hyundai factory driver Hayden Paddon, Pryce did all he needed to do to close on that elusive BRC crown that he has been within a whisker of three times in his career.

With the rally based in Aberystwyth, just a short drive from his home, Pryce was well aware that he needed to win to hunt down championship leader Keith Cronin. Arguably in the pound seat after winning the inaugural running of the event in 2019, Pryce played second fiddle to the Irishman following the opening two seafront blasts, but it wasn't long before it all came tumbling down around Cronin's ears.

A high-speed roll just a few hundred yards into the final test on Saturday night put Cronin's Volkswagen Polo out on the spot and it left James Williams, debuting the Hyundai i20 N Rally2 on UK soil, in the BRC lead.

But Pryce had a weather eye on proceedings during Sunday morning and, although it started wet, he had an inkling that it would dry out quickly on the moors — and it did. As those around him bolted on wets, Pryce and co-driver Noel O'Sullivan threw on the slicks in a masterclass move. Cue the BRC lead after the opening stage of the day.

The Volkswagen Polo GTI pilot assumed control from there on to take the maximum BRC points and second overall to Paddon's Hyundai i20 N R5.

"I'm over the moon with that one," said Pryce. "There's a number of people that could have taken the win this weekend to be honest, but I'm really impressed with how everything has gone, I'm super-happy with the car.

"You only have to look at the calibre of the guys who haven't made it to the end. It's clearly no mean feat to finish this rally and with a car that's pretty much unmarked; it's been a pretty special weekend. A huge thanks to all my supporters who have got me here. There's now just the small matter of finding the budget for the next one."

Williams did enough to retain second spot in the BRC after a taxing day in the Hyundai. A "scrappy" run over Sunday morning's loop on the wrong tyres for the conditions kept him at arm's length from Pryce but well ahead of Ruairi Bell in his Skoda Fabia R5, who was third BRC driver home. Williams also netted maximum Protyre National Asphalt points with his drive.

The BRC also crowned its first champion of the 2022 season as Eamonn Kelly did enough to seal the Junior British Rally Championship title with two rounds to spare. Kelly endured a brush with a Welsh wall on his way to a maximum points haul and a sensational early crown.

It's back to the forests next when Trackrod Rally Yorkshire hosts the penultimate round of the season at the end of this month.

MATT COTTON

Kelly secured JBRC crown with two events to spare

RALLY RESULTS (BRC ONLY)

1 Osian Pryce/Noel O'Sullivan (Volkswagen Polo GTI R5); 2 James Williams/Dai Roberts (Hyundai i20 N Rally2) +1m25.3s; 3 Ruairi Bell/Max Freeman (Skoda Fabia R5); 4 Garry Pearson/Dale Furniss (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 5 Elliot Payne/Patrick Walsh (Ford Fiesta Rally2); 6 Eamonn Kelly/Conor Mohan (Ford Fiesta Rally4).
Junior BRC Kelly/Mohan.

For full results visit:
britishrallychampionship.co.uk

Reigning champion Menzies rose to the occasion and took vital victory

PAUL LAWRENCE

Menzies edges ahead in title race as rain shakes up Prescott order

PRESCOTT
BRITISH HILLCLIMB
3-4 SEPTEMBER

The contest for the 2022 British Hillclimb Championship moved to a shower-affected Prescott with another run-off victory for reigning champion Wallace Menzies ahead of the Loton Park finale.

Menzies and Alex Summers enacted the latest instalment of their titanic season-long contest for the British crown at the Gloucestershire venue.

The big variable on Sunday was the weather, with light showers impacting the class runs and run-offs. In the dry opening class runs, it was Scott Moran who set the pace on 35.50s to be fastest qualifier for the first run-off.

But as the first runs got under way, a light drizzle started to fall. Those who had qualified in the lower end of the top 12 had the pick of the conditions and, after qualifying ninth, Dave Uren had the best fortune of all. He turned in a great climb to take his second run-off win of the season in 37.09s, heading the under two-litre cars of Paul Haimes and Stuart Sugden. "We had the luck of the weather," said Uren, modestly.

Uren took full advantage of the conditions to top first run-off

The big guns running later — including Summers, Menzies and Trevor Willis — all finished in the lower end of the run-off, with Menzies heading Summers in eighth and 10th respectively. Due to run last, Moran opted not to risk the car.

In the afternoon, following a lengthy delay to deal with a medical issue for a spectator, it was the class runs that were hit by the weather, and those who ran early or late in the order got a better deal. A very shuffled run-off featured five 1100cc single-seater drivers as well as the big hitters in the most diverse line-up for a very long time.

Incredibly, three members of the Summers family all made the cut — Alex's wife Debbie and father Richard, sharing their 1100cc DJ Firehawk, both qualified to create a remarkable family record.

By the time the run-off started, the track was drying fast. Willis set a fine personal best to leave the target at 35.61s and Moran was close behind on 35.65s, though admitted to being a little cautious under the trees in the Esses.

Last to tackle the climb were Summers and Menzies, and everything rested on the final two runs of the day. Summers was quick and fired the DJ Firestorm up the hill in superb style to stop the clocks on 35.11s. Menzies had sat on the line trying to avoid knowing his rival's time, but a display popped up to tell him what he had to do to take maximum points and fend off Summers in the title race. Sure enough, Menzies dug deep and beat Summers by just 0.06s to take the run-off victory with a 35.05s.

Menzies summed up proceedings: "It's been a really odd day. In the second run-off I knew that Alex had given it full send and that there had been enough grip, so I had to ignore what we'd learned from running in the damp."

PAUL LAWRENCE

HILLCLIMB RESULTS

ROUND 26
1 David Uren (3.5 Gould-NME GR55B) 37.09s; 2 Paul Haimes (1.3t Gould-Suzuki GR59) 37.38s; 3 Stuart Sugden (1.6 GWR-Hayabusa Raptor) 38.05s; 4 Johnathen Varley (2.0 GWR-TKD V8 Predator) 38.32s; 5 Darren Gumbley (1.6 Force-Hayabusa TA) 38.69s; 6 David Warburton (1.6 Gould-Suzuki GR59) 39.75s; 7 Jack Cottrill (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Dallara) 40.05s; 8 Wallace Menzies (3.3 Gould-Cosworth GR59M) 41.93s; 9 Richard Spedding (1.6 GWR-Hayabusa Raptor 2) 42.40s; 10 Alex Summers (2.7 DJ-Cosworth Firestorm) 42.44s.

ROUND 27
1 Menzies 35.05s; 2 Summers 35.11s; 3 Trevor Willis (3.2 OMS 28-RTE) 35.61s; 4 Scott Moran (4.0 Gould-Judd GR59J) 35.65s; 5 Uren 37.31s; 6 Sugden 37.49s; 7 Debbie Summers (1.1 DJ-Suzuki Firehawk) 39.17s; 8 David Tatham (1.1 OMS-Suzuki Hornet) 39.74s; 9 Liam Cooper (1.6 Force-Hayabusa TA) 40.00s; 10 Harry Pick (1.0 OMS-Suzuki 3000M) 40.10s.

POINTS
1 Menzies 230; 2 Summers 225; 3 Moran 208; 4 Willis 160; 5 Matthew Ryder 147; 6 Uren 122.

For full results visit: britishhillclimb.co.uk

ACCESSIBLE, FRIENDLY AND COMPETITIVE

Thrown in at the deep end, Autosport tried to get to grips with the Ma7da Championship

STEFAN MACKLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY **STEVE JONES**

We've all been there at one time or another, eagerly waiting for a set of traffic lights to change. Revs rising, finding the biting point of the clutch before trying to limit wheelspin and not stall, while for a fleeting second or two — in our minds at least — we're racing drivers trying to get the jump on our 'rivals'. (*careful now! - ed*)

Those same actions are racing through this writer's head while sitting on the Silverstone starting grid, looking up in anticipation for the five red lights to come on and then disappear for my inaugural standing start, having only driven the car I'm in for the first time earlier that morning. The race in question is the latest round of the 750 Motor Club's Ma7da Championship, while the car is a proven race-winning machine in the hands of regular driver Ben Powney, with Autosport given the chance to get behind the wheel last month while he performed best-man duties.

Created in 2019, when it began life sharing grids alongside the Sport Specials, the category was granted championship status in 2021 and is growing from strength to strength.

A total of 28 drivers took part in at least one meeting last season, with a high of 22 for Brands Hatch, while 24 have already competed this year. Two rounds remain, at Anglesey this weekend and Snetterton in October.

An off-shoot of the popular Locost Championship, the Ma7da cars are predominantly an upgrade, with a larger engine — a 1.8-litre VVT Mazda MX-5 — and Yokohama tyres offering much more grip.

"Bearing in mind we've been interrupted by COVID-19 as well, it's been a solid start," says Powney, who finished runner-up in Ma7da last year and previously raced Locost and F1000s.

"Whenever you roll out a new championship it always takes a little bit of time to get going, and this one seems to have hit the ground running and it looks like it's only going to get better as well."

I'm welcomed into Team Sellars Racing by owner Stuart Sellars, a mainstay of the 750MC having run cars in Locost, F1000 and Ma7da, while regular drivers Jonathan Lisseter, Eddie Mawer and Simon Cort are on hand throughout to offer me pointers and advice. Watching onboards from their Friday testing, one thing that's surprisingly noticeable is how much the car understeers through high-speed corners. Not something I expected of a rear-wheel-drive car that in my mind at least would be on the verge of spinning every time the throttle is applied...

It's a busy schedule, with scrutineering, qualifying, a drivers' briefing and two 15-minute races taking place in the space of a day, and all while trying to get my head around a completely new car.

Mackley (r) checks the times after qualifying

Team boss Sellars (l) works to fix a problem

Helped by having at least driven the Silverstone International layout previously, I soon get used to the low cockpit position and the strange sensation of having a lot more car in front of me than usual.

The car in general feels responsive and controllable, with the rear generally planted as I try to gain more confidence through the high-speed bends, the flat-out left of Farm proving the most daunting as the car pushes wide.

My deficit of 6.62 seconds to pole, while pretty sobering, is pleasing enough, having spent all of 10 laps in the car. The run isn't without incident, though, as the engine drops to three cylinders at one point, and I find that the brake and throttle pedals are too close together, meaning I'm catching both under braking, which is rectified ahead of the opening race.

I'm not the only driver making my debut in the championship. Stephen Manley is competing in his first-ever car race, having bought a Locost chassis in 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown and spent the last two years converting it to Ma7da specification.

"Some of the success was just getting it ready for this weekend," says the AlphaTauri Formula 1 aerodynamic model designer, who for 20 years has worked for teams including Jaguar, Red Bull, Honda, Lotus and Marussia. "I thought if I don't do it now [go racing], I won't ever do it."

Like many in the championship, Manley has been attracted by its generally affordable budget — in the region of £10,000 for a new car or less if home-built — ease of acquiring spare parts and the relative simplicity of maintaining and running his own car.

"I liked the idea of the engine being standard and you're not spending all your time tuning it," he adds, "and if anything did go wrong you're not spending loads to fix it."

Apart from 10 laps at Donington Park for a shakedown, Manley, like me, is in at the deep end and he quickly becomes my direct rival, albeit at the back of the field.

Having actually got a decent launch at the start, I lose time on the opening lap due to a missed gearchange down Hangar Straight, but I slowly reel Manley in before running wide at Abbey and losing all rhythm.

Manley suffers from a misfire in the closing laps and again I close the gap, but any chance of beating him is dashed due to an ECU issue — related to not changing up from third quite soon enough — heading onto the final lap, which robs me of nearly all power. Still, my best lap time has improved by nearly 2.1s, placing me *only* 4.54s off the fastest lap.

While success might be proving elusive on the track, without doubt the most pleasant aspect of the event is the warm welcome among both TSR and the championship as a whole.

"We try to work really hard on the friendliness of the paddock," says Powney, a driver representative for the championship. "When there's a new driver, I try and get a handful of people to go over and introduce themselves, because that first race is terrifying for most people."

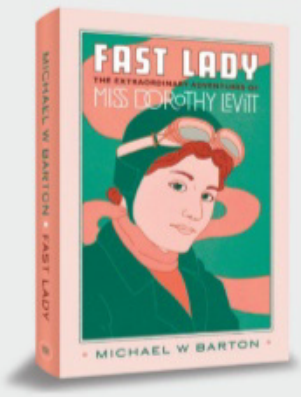
Also very apparent looking at the results is just how competitive the championship is, with series rookie Mawer claiming his maiden win in race one, and Lisseter cementing his points lead in race two with victory — but only after race-long battles with less than 2s covering the top four on both occasions.

Having avoided a collision at the start that necessitates a safety car, my race two is a lonely one, with Manley having retired with a repeat of his misfire, while I'm left disappointed after my best lap is again some 6.33s off. A check of the car weeks later reveals a lack of power in fourth gear, which accounts for some of the time loss, but there's no denying the calibre at the front.

But, more importantly, my experience in the paddock showcases an affordable, accessible and friendly championship, which is the lifeblood of UK motorsport.

"These cars will always generate close racing," adds Powney. "Once I had decided I wanted to move on from Locost, I looked at all sorts. It was trying to find something that was quicker and harder to drive, but still had that element of really close racing. I've not seen anything else in club racing that's as close as the Ma7das."

The pioneer for female racing drivers



BOOK REVIEW
FAST LADY: THE EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURES OF MISS DOROTHY LEVITT
Michael Barton
RRP £40

Edwardian motorsport pioneer Dorothy Levitt died 100 years ago this year, so Michael Barton's biography is a timely one. Levitt's life has been the subject of many articles over the years and even a TV programme in 2004, but this is the first biography dedicated to her.

Almost a century before Jamie Chadwick started to dominate in W Series, Levitt was Britain's most successful female racing driver between 1903 and 1908, becoming a media sensation of her time. She was a winner at the 1905 Brighton Speed Trials, scored class victories at the Southport and Blackpool trials and won awards at the Herkomer Trophy in Germany in 1908. She usually drove Napier cars and was closely involved with Napier's charismatic director Selwyn Edge.

Her racing career ended with the Napier programme's termination in 1908, but Levitt herself continued to work as a journalist, advocating for women's "right to motor", until she vanished from public view in 1913, only to reappear in 1920 having been arrested for her involvement in an illegal gambling den. She died of morphine poisoning in 1922, aged just 40.

Barton's 120-page book, released by Butterworth Press, combines social history with motorsport history, and early motor racing enthusiasts have a comprehensive rundown of Levitt's sporting endeavours to enjoy, both on four wheels and on the water. Details of routes and other competitors are provided for the early cross-country trials and beachfront speed runs, as well as notes on Levitt's own performance, plus many anecdotes, such as the antics of Levitt's delinquent dog Dodo on the 1904 Hereford Trial. Some of this information is well-known but some is new and this is the first time it has all been chronicled in one place.

Chadwick is reigning W Series champion

Attractively designed, one of the book's strengths is its selection of photographs (with the inset picture in this article supplied by the Horace W Nicholls Estate). Many are familiar to anyone who has read Levitt's own book, *The Woman and the Car*, but some have been less commonly published and all are reproduced beautifully.

At times, Barton strays into 'dramatic reconstruction' territory and it isn't successful. His story of an impoverished Levitt struggling her way to court in 1920 feels overwrought and adds little to the narrative. It is also factually inaccurate, as Levitt was never charged.

Levitt was a master manipulator of the press and invented a whole new persona; this middle-class Jewish woman from East London became a mysterious demi-aristocrat from the West Country, with hints at a tragic past that may have involved an arranged marriage.

Barton does a decent job of untangling the real woman from her own fabrications, investigating both sides of her family and some of her friends and associates, including Edge, who remains a little in the background — this is Levitt's story.

Levitt advocated for women's "right to motor"

HORACE W NICHOLLS ESTATE

Occasionally, however, a Levitt lie gets through, such as her claim to have taught Queen Alexandra to drive when her fondness for motoring was noted earlier than Levitt's prominence.

Some new evidence is presented in relation to Levitt's wartime disappearance and offers some intriguing lines of enquiry. A possible stint in variety theatre has also been dug up, which is also tantalising but is not investigated much further.

Her drug-related demise is explored in quite significant detail, but there is little evidence to go on and Barton falls back on imaginative reconstruction again and a more general view of early 20th century morphine use.

The weak point of *Fast Lady* is its end. Partly, this is down to the subject matter as Levitt's life and its conclusion will always remain something of a mystery. However, the book finishes rather abruptly, with there perhaps being scope for some further discussion of Levitt's legacy and some of the women who came after her.

That said, *Fast Lady* does a great job of recreating the world of Edwardian motor racing and takes big steps in putting an overlooked, if complex, heroine of British motorsport back on the pedestal she claimed over a century earlier.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER

WHAT'S ON

Italian Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 16/22
Monza, Italy
11 September
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1355
TV **Highlights**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 1800, Channel 4, Sun 1830

Acropolis Rally Greece
World Rally Championship
Round 10/13
Lamia, Greece
8-11 September
TV **Live**
BT Sport 3, Sat 0900, BT Sport 4, Sat 1500, BT Sport 3, Sun 0700
TV **Highlights**
BT Sport 3, Fri 2200, Sat 2000, BT Sport 2, Sun 1900, Red Bull TV, Fri 2000, Sat 2000, Sun 2000

IndyCar
Round 16/16
Laguna Seca, USA
11 September
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sun 2000

World Endurance Championship
Round 5/6
Fuji, Japan
11 September
Livestream
on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0630, Sun 0230,
TV **Live** Eurosport 1, Sun 0230

FIA Formula 2
Round 13/14
Monza, Italy
10-11 September
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sat 1655, Sun 0900

FIA Formula 3
Round 9/9
Monza, Italy
10-11 September
TV **Live**
Sky Sports F1, Sat 0930, Sun 0730

Porsche Supercup
Round 8/8
Monza, Italy
11 September
TV **Live**
Eurosport 1, Sun 1040, Sky Sports F1, Sun 1050

DTM
Round 6/8
Spa, Belgium
10-11 September
TV **Live** BT Sport 4, Sat 1215, BT Sport 7, Sun 1215

DTM Trophy
Round 5/7
Spa, Belgium
10-11 September
Livestream
on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1400, Sun 1400,
TV **Live** BT Sport 4, Sat 1400, BT Sport 7, Sun 1400

International GT Open
Round 5/7
Red Bull Ring, Austria
10-11 September
Livestream
on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1240, Sun 1325

Euroformula Open
Round 7/9
Red Bull Ring, Austria
10-11 September

Australian Supercars
Round 10/13
Pukekohe, Australia
10-11 September
TV **Live**
BT Sport 1, Sat 0515, BT Sport 5, Sun 0145, Sun 0445

Indy Lights
Round 11/11
Laguna Seca, USA
10-11 September

NASCAR Cup
Round 28/36
Kansas, USA
11 September
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity
Round 25/33
Kansas, USA
10 September

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 19/23
Kansas, USA
10 September
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sat 0000

UK MOTORSPORT

Brands Hatch MSVR
10-11 September
British GT, GB3, GB4, Ginetta GT5 Challenge, Ginetta GT Academy, Porsche Sprint Challenge
Livestream
on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1550, Sun 1315

Silverstone ECR/MSVR
10 September
Equipe GTS, Equipe Libre, Equipe Pre '63/50s, MG BCV8, Z Cars/Production GTI

Oulton Park MSVR
10 September
EnduroKa, Turismo X

Donington Park CSCC
10-11 September
Classic K, Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Slicks Series, Special Saloons and Modsports, Swinging Sixties, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Anglesey 750MC
10-11 September
Bikesports, BMW Car Club, CALM Porsche, Club Enduro, F1000, Hot Hatch, Ma7da, Roadsports

Mondello Park MPSC
10-11 September
Fiesta ST, Fiesta Zetec, Formula BOSS, Formula Sheane, Formula Vee, Future Classic, HRCA, Mini/Ginetta Junior, SEAT Supercup/ITCC/ Supercar, Strykers

British & European Drag Racing Championship
Santa Pod
8-11 September

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FREDRIK EKBLOM

The future tin-top star had a bits-and-pieces Indycar career

JAMES NEWBOLD

He was sufficiently talented to keep being asked back, but Fredrik Ekblom's Indycar CV shows only three cameo appearances across three years from 1994-96 for three teams.

The future treble Swedish Touring Car champion's thwarted efforts to become a fixture on the grid weren't for a lack of trying — "I had such a big chunk of contracts that never came about I got fed up and I went back to Sweden," he recalls — although he did lack for budget, which had prevented him ascending the European single-seater ladder after finishing second in the 1991 British Formula 3000 Championship.

Ekblom sold his road car to fund an Indy Lights race at Mid-Ohio in 1992, placing second, and was a series regular for 1993, with second at Portland his best finish. "We had no money basically," says Ekblom, now a sales manager at a Porsche dealership. "I had a good name in the States, so I never paid anything to drive in Indycars. That's also why I only did three races..."

A deal with Patrick Racing to develop the Firestone tyres it would use for 1995 went awry — a contract was signed, but Patrick decided to take the more experienced Scott Pruett — and Ekblom hadn't tested before racing Dennis McCormack's year-old Lola at Detroit in 1994. He was 15th after picking up a puncture in contact with Christian Danner: "Then Claude Bourbonnais took the drive with Players' money."

Ekblom spent 1995 racing in IMSA,

"YOU THINK WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, 'I CAN OVERCOME EVERYTHING' BIT IT'S NOT POSSIBLE"

and team owner Harry Brix promised to keep him on for his nascent 1996 Indycar programme, but signed Parker Johnstone instead due to team backer Motorola's preference for an American driver.

"That came in February or something," recalls Ekblom, who'd contested a one-off outing at the 1995 Laguna Seca Indycar finale for AJ Foyt Racing following its split with Eddie Cheever. There, he finished a twice-lapped 19th. "You think when you're young, 'I can overcome everything and do it anyway' but it's not possible," he says. "I wasn't close to the pace."

His final outing came for Walker Racing in the 1996 US 500 at Michigan, replacing an injured Scott Goodyear. Caught up in the farcical start pile-up, he switched to Robby Gordon's back-up car — "He had a car with the latest engine" — but it expired after 11 laps.

Ekblom has no doubt that he could have been a hit in Indycars given a stable team environment, but has no regrets: "You can't say no, you just have to take the chance, I had no choice really. I think I could have done a good job if we had got a proper deal, but in the end I didn't pay anything to drive an Indycar. Not that many people can say that."

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Peter Collins takes an early stint in the Aston Martin DB3 he shared with Pat Griffith during the 1952 Goodwood 9 Hours, billed by Autosport as an opportunity for British fans to "witness true Le Mans-style racing" thanks to its midnight finish. Our report stated that "at no time was the race devoid of interest", including a pitlane fire that destroyed one of the other two works Astons. With Jaguar and Ferrari challenges falling short, it was the #17 DB3 that took the flag 70 years ago last month – and this car will go under the hammer at this month's Goodwood Revival. See next week's Autosport for our Revival preview.

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Nurburgring Nordschleife

Ask any GT3 racer for their favourite circuit, and perhaps half of them will cite the unforgiving Nurburgring Nordschleife, which remains arguably the most challenging in the world. But it's perhaps more surprising that four-time World Touring Car Championship title-winner Yvan Muller singles out the track Jackie Stewart famously labelled the 'Green Hell', which Muller freely admits is "the one I like but also I hate".

The Frenchman has two wins at the Nordschleife, achieved in 2015 and 2018 in highly contrasting circumstances. The first, for the Citroen factory team, came after hunting down Tiago Monteiro's Honda and using his C-Elysee's prodigious top speed – thanks to trimming the downforce for optimal speed on the long Dottinger Hohe back straight – to pass into Tiergarten.

"It's a crazy circuit," reflects Muller. "When you do it on endurance, it's one thing. But when you do it at the sprint race as we do in touring cars, it's very different. That's why I am excited to drive the Nordschleife when we go.

"But, at the same time, I'm happy to not go back anymore during the season when the race is over. Because to race there, as we do, with the level we are pushing in the car..."

Muller trails off, perhaps reflecting on his experience in 2016. He had no chance to react when leader Monteiro suffered a right-front puncture at Kesselchen, hit the wall and bounced back onto the road in front of him.

Muller retired from racing at the end of that season when Citroen switched its attentions to rallying, but was coerced back into the cockpit for the first season of WTCR in 2018 when he fielded his own two-car Yvan Muller Racing Hyundai team. Fittingly, he took his and the team's first victory at the Nordschleife, heading home team-mate Thed Bjork in a YMR 1-2 that he calls "very satisfying".

"The Citroen was the fastest car I had in Nordschleife, super-fast in the corners," says Muller, who also took second places with Lynk & Co in 2020 and 2021. "To be at 300km/h in the straight, anybody can do it, or almost anybody. But to be fast in the corners is a different thing."

JAMES NEWBOLD

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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. Subscription records are maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.
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Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT.
ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.

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